An Antidote AGAINST DISTRACTIONS:

OR,

An Indeavour to ſerve the Church, in the daily Caſe of WANDRINGS in the Worſhip of GOD.

By *Richard Steele* M. A. and Miniſter of the Goſpel.

Judges 16. 15. *How canſt thou ſay, I love thee, when thy heart is not with me?*

Pſalm 119. 10. *With my whole heart have I ſought thee, O let me not wander———*

Baſil con. 9. de Oratione. Οὐ γὰρ ἀπλῶς τὰ ῥήματα ὁ προσεύχης ἀφιεὶς, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὴ παιδαίας διαθέσεως ἀναπίμπλης.

Bernard. de inter. Domo. c. 29. 33. Non cogitanda cogito, cogitata recogito, & eadem iterum iterumque replicare non ceſſo, — in choro ſum corpore, & in aliquo negotio mente— Aliud canto, & aliud cogito, pſalmodiæ verba profero, & pſalmodiæ ſenſum non attendo: væ mihi, quoniam ibi pecco, ubi peccata emendare debeo.

The Second Edition Corrected and Amended.

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IMPRIMATUR,

Tho. Tomkins, R. R^mo in *Christo* Patri ac Domino, D^no *Gilberto* Divinâ Providentiâ Archiepiscopo Cantuariensi à Sacris Domesticis.

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Thomas Ingham His Book

The DEDICATION hereof TO THE *Most Holy TRINITY.

*Dio Uni & Trino. Alsted. Encyclop. O. M. Θεανθρώτω Jesu Christo. R. Monracutius Ep. Norv. in Act. & Mon. of the Church, Et Alii quamplurimi.

THese first fruits I humbly lay at thy blessed footstool, being ambitious of no other Patron but Thy Self; for, Thou alone canst attest the sincerity of my aim herein, which will plead with Thee for the imbecillities thereof: Thou alone art the right Author of every valuable line and word in

this ensuing Tract. The Errata's only are mine, but the Honour's Thine. Thou hast the strongest hand, and truest heart to protect, both the Writing and the Writer from all the malicious or unkind usage, that we may meet with. Thy approbation chiefly I humbly crave, and then I am sure to have all good men on my side. Against Thee, Thee only have I offended by my Distractions, and done these evils in Thy sight; and therefore am bound to seek the destruction of them, in all the world for Thy sake. Thou hast so infinitely obliged the unworthy Writer of these lines, that he rejoyces in this opportunity

portunity to tell the world, That there is none in Heaven or Earth to be compared to Thee. *Thou only canſt make my Indeavours herein ſucceſful, and bring that to the heart, which I could only preſent to the ear or eye. Unto Thee therefore do I dedicate both this and my ſelf, with this earneſt Prayer, That this Eſſay may both pleaſe Thee, and profit thy Church! That Thou wouldeſt take this Rod into Thy hands, and therewith whip theſe buyers and ſellers out of Thy Temple! That Thy great Name may hereby be magnified, though the Writers were never known! To Thy hea-*

venly bleſsing, do I moſt humbly recommend this mean work, and worthleſs Workman, with a Reſolution to remain, while I have any Being,

Thine own

Richard Steel.

To the ſerious Reader, eſpecially the firſt Hearers thereof.

Chriſtian Reader,

OU have here an Antidote againſt the moſt common diſtemper of God's people in his Worſhip. My own diſeaſe cauſed me to ſtudy the cure; the general complaint of good people againſt theſe *Egyptian Flyes*, moved me to preach it; and the common good of God's Church (not without ſolicitations thereto) hath now perſwaded me to publiſh it. Be not offended, that ſo much is written of ſo

minute a point; greater Tracts of the Fever, Stone, or Tooth-ach (whereby they might be certainly cured) would not be thought too long, by such as are sick thereof. Indeed, this had never seen the light, but that the disease is so general, and that so few, if any, that have throughly, and on purpose handled it. However, this may serve (as the Learned *L. Verulam* * hath it) to *awake better spirits, and to do the Bell-ringer's office, who is first up, to call others to Church.* This being my first Essay, riper Judgements will (I believe) observe divers defects and superfluities therein, but Candour is a common debt, which we all owe one to another; and one poor mite may be accepted by men, when two mites can please Christ himself. It is my Request *to you* especially, that were the first Hearers hereof, that ye be not Hearers or Readers only, but Doers of the Word.

* Letter to the E. of *Salisb.* concerning his Advancement.

The

The world knows, you have been *conſtant hearers*, let the world ſee, that you are *careful doers*. The indubitable truths and duties, that I have ſtill laid before you, will undoubtedly convert you, or elſe undoubtedly condemn you; and therefore I beſeech you, in the bowels of Chriſt, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain. For now I live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord. And my earneſt requeſt *for you*, is, that Divine Power may accompany Divine Precepts. If you reap any benefit, let God have all the *praiſe*, and put the poor Inſtrument into ſome corner of your *prayers*. I have choſen a dialect and phraſe familiar, for the advantage of the matter, rather than the applauſe of the Writer, being contented to be ranked among thoſe, *qui non ſecundum artem ſcripſerunt, ſed ſecundum gratiam*; you will excuſe the unevenneſs of the ſtile, and other imperfections, when you

Amroſ. lib. 8. Ep. 63.

you underſtand that I had more *ſtudies* than *Books* in the compoſing hereof, being diſtant from my Library, and variouſly diſtracted in the writing about Diſtractions. But my aim being a ſolid cure, not a ſtarcht diſcourſe, I have choſen a Divinity dreſs, and *not preached my ſelf* [who am the chief of ſinners] *but Chriſt Jeſus my Lord* [the chief of Goods] *and my ſelf*,

Your Servant for Jeſus ſake,

May 10.
1667.

R. S.

The

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CHAP

CHAP. I.

The Text explained. The Doctrine proposed, and a Distraction described.

SECTION I.

1 Cor. 7. 35. —— *That you may attend upon the Lord without Distraction.*

Εὐπρόσεδρον τῷ Κυρίῳ ἀπερισπάστως.

§. 1. The dependance of the words.

THE Apostle is a Casuist in this Chapter, and the present Case is about *Virginity* and *Marriage*; wherein I. He determines for the former, [*ver.* 26.] when the Church was in the *bonds* of Persecution, it was not safe to be in the *bonds* of Marriage. II. He prevents mistakes, [*verse* 27, 28.] though the single man be fittest to suffer, yet there is neither that sin nor misery on the married, as to dissolve the sacred knot. III. He offers Reasons for this Resolve. 1. One, from the

 crosses

crosses and troubles *then* attending the state of Marriage, [*verse* 28.] Thorns as well as Roses. 2. The other, from the Cares that *alwayes* accompany it [*verse* 32.] For the *Man*, now is his heart * divided. *Before*, if I can but please the Lord, and contrive how to live comfortably with my God *; this is all my care and ambition. *Now*, the stream of my thoughts and affections is parted; I must please and provide for my Wife, [*verse* 32, 33.] For the *Woman*, now is her task doubled. *Before*, her whole aim was to please her Husband in Heaven: *Now* must her designs and respects be for her earthly Husband also. [*verse* 34.] Not that these several Relations are inconsistent, but to provide for these new Duties and Temptations will distract the mind, especially in the dayes of Tryal. † IV. He qualifies his Counsel, and explains himself, [*verse* 35.] It is no part of my meaning, either to obtrude the Doctrine or Duty of Cœlibate upon you, that to avoid a *strait*, you should run upon a *sin*; but my motion is, 1. For your *profit*; my office, and so my counsel is rather to profit, than to please you. 2. There is a *comeliness* or * conveniency in it; both states are alwayes lawful, but the one may sometimes

* μερίμνᾶ.

* *Si orationem facit ad Dominum, propè est Cœlo; Scripturis incumbit, totus illic est. Si Psalmum canit, placet sibi.* Tertull. de exh. cast. p. 670.

† *Tu de castitate canis, illæ somniant etiam viros, flammas patiuntur & faciunt, ubi decorum? ubi adhæsio Domini? ubi finis à Paulo positus? sublato fine, tolli debent ad illud destinata.* Aretius in loc.

* So the word is used.

1 Cor. 14. 40.

sometimes be more convenient. And 3. My ultimate design is, that you may chuse that state, wherein you may best *Attend* upon the Lord without Distraction. This the occasion and tendency of these words.

SECT. II.

§. 2.

FRom the general import of these words flows this *Annotation*,

An Observation.

That condition should be chosen by all, that's best for their souls. Your *outward* condition must serve your *inward* condition; and this life must be subservient to another life. If single-life do every way better qualifie you, to serve the Lord, and save your souls, this is the best life for you; and if Marriage be better for your souls, no state is better.

For if the soul prosper, All prospers; and if that miscarry, All's lost. If to be a Prince were dangerous for the soul, 'twere better to be a Beggar: If a poor state do enrich the soul, it is the best estate.

This needs not to be proved unto Christians, that will be granted by Heathens; some of whom have so powerfully discoursed

courſed of the immortality and excellency of the ſoul, that their Auditors have poſted to death by *ſelf-deſtruction*, for the happy ſtate thereof. If Pagans would chuſe *to dye*, as a condition beſt for the ſoul, well may we chuſe that condition *of life*, which beſt ſerves the ſoul; leſt thoſe Acts which were unable to juſtifie *them*, prove able to condemn *us* with a witneſs.

Let this Axiom come in, when you are diſpoſing your children or your ſelves; being confident, when you are moſt ſollicitous about the ſoul, God will be moſt careful for the body; and you will meet with leaſt *diſtreſs*, when you ſee the leaſt *Diſtraction*.

§. 3.

SECT. III.

The Explication of the Text.

THe words of the Text preſent us with a Deſign, that Believers as often aim at, and yet miſs, as any in the World; and which is ſo excellent a rare attainment, that the Holy Ghoſt even makes two words on purpoſe to expreſs it by, no where elſe found in the *New-*

New Testament; (a) *To Attend on the Lord without Distraction.* *Hierome* confesseth that the Latine can hardly express the Emphasis of the Greek in this clause; and that thereupon it was wholly omitted in the Latine Books. In the words we must consider,

(a) *Quod intentè facit servire Domino sine ullâ distractione.* Hieron. lib. 1. contr. Jovin. By comparing whereof with the present Vulgar, you may easily see the Vulgar was none of *Hieromes*. For thus the Vulgar, *Quod facultatem præbeat sine impedimento Dominum obsecrandi*, miswritten for *observandi*, as *Beza* thinks. But *Erasmus* sayes the oldest Translation was, *Domino observiendi*, after turned into *observandi* and by some *obsecrandi*.

1. The Matter What, [*Attend upon the Lord.*]

2. The manner how, [*Without Distraction.*]

1. The Matter what, [*Attend upon the Lord.*] The *Greek* word for [Attend] in our Copies hath a notable elegancy in it. 1. That you may be (b) *Fit and ready* for Gods Service, That Religion and religious Duties may sit fitly on you, that you may be *ready* to serve the Lord in Duty or Suffering. A most sweet frame of soul, to be alwayes bent and strung for the Ser-

(b) Some Copies read εὐπάρεδρον some εὐπρόσδεκτον acceptable. This way the *Arabick* speaks, *ut confortemini quàm proximè secundum Dominum.* But the truest is our own. εὐπρόσεδρον *decompositum* of ἕζομαι *sedeo* from which the *Syriack* differs little.

vice of God. *That man is meet for the Masters use, that is prepared unto every good work*, 2 Tim. 2. 21. How many choice opportunities for instruction, for reproof, for charity, for prayer do we hazard, yea and lose for want of a Soul quick and ready to our duty. 2. That you may be (*c*) *Fixt and setled* in his Service. The word intimates such an (*d*) inseparable cleaving, such a marriage of the mind to the work of God, that we have in hand, as can by no means suffer a divorce. It should be as hard a matter, to break off the heart from God in his service, being married to him, and setled in holy duties, as it is to abstract the Misers soul from the world, to which it is glued.

2. The Manner how, [*Without Distraction* :] The sense hereof is almost prevented, by the *Emphasis* of the former word. Yet this Word is not without its great weight: And it speaks a (*e*) *quiet unshaken and immoveable* frame of Soul, which cannot be whirled about with vain trifles. The soul is never at that holy quiet, as when it is directly ascending and

(c) *Assidere, aptè adhærescere* Legh. *Assiduus in aliquo negotio.* Stephan.

(d) *Indivulsè adhærens.* Budæus. *Quasi à latere alicujus nunquam descedens.* Stephan. *Tet sitis seduli more fidorum servorum qui à latere domini sui non discedunt.* Bez. è Syr.

(e) Ἀπερισπάστως of σπάω *Trabo, immobilis, inconcussus, quietus, & qui distrahi nequit* Budæus Stephan. *Usus est hac voce* Plut. *de Curiosit.* ἀπερίσπαστον *appellans, assiduum studium sapientiæ, nullis negotiis aliò mentem avocantibus.*

communing

communing with the Lord, and therefore Satan exceedingly envies this Cœlestial happiness of the Saints, and if he cannot distract them *from* duty, be sure he will distract them *in* it; and this he doth very much (*f*) by the World and the business thereof. And therefore (*saves the Apostle*) guide your condition so, in this suffering season, as that it may not misguide your hearts, in your attendance on the Lord; that you may not attend on your selves, nor on others; but (*g*) on Him, who is the Centre of an Ordinance, and your All in All.

(f) *ut sitis sedulo erga Dominum vestrum, cum honestate decorâ non cogitantes de mundo.* Tremell.

(g) *ut frequens sit oratio.* Sedulius.

Take the sum of all in this Assertion, the main Doctrine from the Text,

It is a Christians Duty to attend on the Lord without Distractions. Doct.

And that I may from this Text and Doctrine profitably handle the Case, and attempt the Cure of Distractions, I shall proceed to shew these things. 1. The Nature of a Distraction. 2. The Kinds of Distractions. 3. That it is our Duty to attend upon the Lord without Distractions. 4. The reasons why we must attend on the Lord without Distractions. 5. Answer the Objections. 6. Describe the Causes of Distractions. 7. The Evil of them. 8. The Cure

of them. 9. Propound some encouragements under the burden of Distractions. 10. Draw some Inferences from this Doctrine. And first of the first, *viz.* the nature of a Distraction.

SECT. IV.

§. 4. The first general Head, *viz.* The description of Distractions.

THE *first Head* will be to describe a Distraction. *A Distraction is a secret wandring of the Heart from God, in some Duty in hand.*

1. *It is a wandring*, As the remisness of our Devotion shoots short, so Distraction shoots awry. 'Tis said, Prov. 27. 8. *As a Bird that wandereth from his nest, so is a man from his place.* * Its commonly known, the ready way to destroy the young in the shell, is discontinuance of heat; and to wander from our heavenly work, produces the dead off-spring of unprofitable Duties. It would be almost as easie to trace and follow the Bird in her vagaries, as the volatile and intricate imaginations of the heart †. It is a digression: you that are curious to observe the Minister in his

* *Primum argumentum compositæ mentis existimo esse, consistere & secum morari.* Senec. Epist. 2.

† The same word *Sotah* signifies the Soul, and a Butterfly, because our wandring imaginations make our wavering spirits like wagling Butterflies puffed up and down with every blast of vanity. Mr. *Pagets Primer.*

his digressions, how much more necessary is it to observe your own?

2. *It is secret*, in the Heart. And this contracts the guilt and nature of Hypocrisie upon a Distraction; for we have a short and clear description of hypocrisie, which agrees too well with distractions, Matth. 15. 7, 8. *This People draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me.* To have a bended knee, a craving eye, are choice *Expressions* of Duty: but without the *Impressions* and attendance of the heart, *are double iniquity and flat hypocrisie. How empty would our Congregations be sometimes, if no more bodies were present, than there are souls? And what abundance of sorry service hath our God, that no body sees?

* In the Sacrifices of the Law, the Inwards still were offered to God, the skin was for the Priest.

Yet how unknown soever these triflings of the mind are to others, or to our selves, yet are they most palpable to the Lord, who sets our most *secret sins in the clearest light of his Countenance*; and though these *primo-primi motus* may antevert the use of Reason, and therefore seem small Peccadillo's, yet they fall under the rebuke of Religion; and are as sinfull as they are secret: Good in secret is the best Goodness;

Psal. 90. 8.

neſs, and ſecret ſinfulneſs, the worſt ſinfulneſs.

3. This wandring of the Heart *is from God*, for God is the Object of Worſhip. To pray aright is, Zech. 8. 21. *To pray before the Lord.* To give thanks aright is, Dan. 6. 10. *To give thanks before his God*, not in his ſight only, for ſo you are, when your hearts are worſt; but they did look on God when they ſpake to him, as we do look on men, when we ſpeak to them. *Melanchon* ſayes, he hath heard *Luther* in his ſecret prayers ſo pray, that one would verily think, there were ſome body in the room with him to whom he ſpake.

4. This wandring is, while ſome Duty is in hand; to deſert Duty is *Nihil agere*, to do divine duties to Diabolical ends is *Malè agere*, to divert the Soul is *Aliud agere*. *Hoc age* muſt be the Chriſtians Motto, in the Worſhip of God. That was a good anſwer, *Neh.* 6. 3. of *Nehemiah* to his falſe friends, *I am doing a great work, ſo that I cannot come down, Why ſhould the work ceaſe while I leave it and come down to you?* He that is in a Duty to God, is about a very great work, And that work ſtands, or goes backward every moment the heart is away; and

and why should a * temporal vanity set back and perhaps quite unravel your eterna concernment? How will that *Spartan* youth rise up in judgement against us, that holding the Censer during *Alexanders* Heathen Sacrifices, would not stir his hand from its duty; though the burning coals fell thereon, and made his flesh to fry and smell in the presence of all the Spectators?

* When King *Ethelbert* was at his Devotion, news was brought of the *Danes* invasion at *Essenden*, but he neither omitted, nor abreviated his prayers, he would hear no suit on Earth, till he had made his requests in Heaven, and afterwards he bravely vanquished them. Dr. *T. Fuller.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The Kinds of Distractions.

SECT. I.

Cap. 2. The second general Head, *viz.* The kinds of Distractions.

§. 1. Their several Fountains.

THE *second Head* will be to take a view of the *kinds or sorts of our Distractions*, And they are Diversified. 1. From the Fountain whence they flow. 2. From the matter whereof they Consist. 3. From their Adjuncts. For the first of them, you will find

1. *Many of our Distractions may justly be fathered on the Devil.* He is a spiritual substance, and is most properly conversant in spiritual sins; He is compleatly skil'd in all thoughts, whatsoever; and therefore what he imparts here, is of his own. Zech. 3. 1. *The High Priest* Joshua could not be at his Prayers for the Israel of God, but as Christ the Angel of the Covenant was on one hand, *Satan was standing on the other*, and he was got at the* readier hand *the right hand*, the hand of action, that he might hinder him more *dextrously* in his Devotion. And when *Satan stands on the right hand*, *the Prayer* is in danger to

* Eccles. 10. 2. *A wise mans heart is at his right hand.* i. e. His heart is ready and prepared to every good work. *Anot. in loc.*

to *become sin*, *Psal.* 109. 6, 7. When we are most serious before the Angel, the Devil is whispering at our Elbow, and who can be dull and watchless, when God is on one hand, and Satan on the other?

The Devil is afraid of a serious lively prayer at his heart; he knows, that can pull down in a minute, what he hath been contriving a thousand years; and therefore if he cannot withhold us from holy Duties, he will do his utmost to disturb us in them. Hence the vision of that *Holy man* who in the whole Market saw but one Devil busie, (for there Self was at hand, Satan had no need to bestir him) but in the * Congregation there were multitudes of them, all their skill and power being little enough to stave off poor souls from *Jesus Christ*. Alas! we pray, and hear, and live as securely, as if there were no Devil at all.

And His suggestions in Religious duties are usually more † violent and impetuous, more dreadful and impious than they of our own breeding; called therefore *Darts*, and *fiery Darts of that wicked one*; Though he lay these brats of his at thy door, yet they will be counted in the number of his *sins*, and of thy *afflictions*.

* *Non enim unquam dormitat vigil ille Synagogæ suæ* Episcopus. Amma.

† *Impetus Diabolici fortiores affectibus naturalibus. Joab* could hinder *David* from weeping for *Absolon*, not from numbring the people, to which *Satan* stir'd him up. *D. Arrowsm.*

2. *Our*

2. *Our Diſtractions proceed from the Mind and underſtanding.* The *Vanity of the mind alienates us from the life of God*, and from communion with him. When a preſent and ſeaſonable petition or inſtruction is conveyed through the ear into the underſtanding, It wantonly playes therewith, and takes occaſion to run out on ſome contiguous notion; and from that to another, and at length reſts and dwells on ſome alien and unſeaſonable point, till the gales of the good Spirit, and the preſent Matter be overpaſt. And thus by a default in the Pſal. 53. 2. *underſtanding we ſeek not God*, nor find him as we might; And that excellent faculty, that would penetrate into the Divine Myſteries, and ſhould guide the will and heart unto God, by the *Ignis fatuus* of its unmortified Vanity, miſleads us from the chief Good, and intangles us in diſtractions. We read 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Of a filthineſs of the Spirit*, whereof ſurely this is a part, and muſt be cleanſed in them, that will *perfect holineſs in the fear of God.*

3. *Some Diſtractions proceed from the Fancy*, a moſt buſie faculty, that's moſt unruly and leaſt ſanctified in an Holy man. *Sometimes* by the help of memory, ſtepping back into things paſt, ſhe brings into the moſt ſolemn

solemn worship a thousand passages that are past and gone, and rowling them in the head, carries soul and all quite away from God: hence it is, you often hear them say, * *such a thing came into my mind at Sermon or Prayer* that was forgotten weeks or months before: yea, daring to re-act former sins by contemplative wickedness in the very sight of God, which doubles the guilt by repetition, and makes your former sins (*a*) exceeding sinful. In this sense that *Eccles.* 6. 9. is true, *Better is the sight of the eyes, than the* * *wandring of the Desire*; there is something more of evil in these second contemplations, than in the first Commissions. *Sometimes* the Fancy will create a world of figments and notions out of nothing, and multiply impertinent thoughts upon no ground and to no purpose; and can sally out of the present matter to every adjacent business, and make a great ado to bring nothing to pass. Job 27. 8. *There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the Vultures eye hath not seen*, the fancy can find out such a way; thus God is not in all (hardly in any of) our thoughts, when we pretend to treat him with the greatest solemnity.

And

* *Cùm resupini jacemus in lectulo, nihil tale cogitamus. Sed cum venimus ad Orationem cogitationes avocant & sine fructu efficiunt.* Chrys. de nat. Dom. Hom. 17.

(a) *Nonnunquam verò quod agi in corpore, hoc importunè versa in mente. In corde enim servo depicta quæ vidi & feci: torpet ab utili operæ quoniam fatiget illicita cogitatione.* Bern. de int. Dom. c. 30.

* *Heb.* The walking of the soul.

And *sometimes* the Fancy breeds Diſtractions by fore-caſting things to come (*b*): So many a man can moſt eaſily, on the Sabbath, contrive his buſineſs for all the Week after; and the poor woman in the corner of a Prayer order the buſineſs of all the houſe for a day. Hence many an affair is curſed to our hands, by our unhappy contrivance thereof in the time of worſhip. Thus we have ſome, ſaying (in their hearts no doubt) *Amos* 8. 5. *When will the New Moon be gone, that we may ſell Corn; and the Sabbath, that we may ſet forth Wheat?* And it is well, if they have no fellows in this Aſſembly that are making their Hay, meaſuring their Corn, counting their Coyn, if not providing for their Luſts, while they ſeem earneſt with the Lord negotiating for Eternity.

(b) Thus, *Præcedentia peccata ſunt ſequentium cauſa, ſequentia ſunt præcedentium pœna.* Aug.

4. *Our Diſtractions in Gods Worſhip are ſometimes occaſioned by our outward* (c) *Senſes.* Moſt frequently by the Eye; a wandring Eye moſtly hath a wandring Heart; for when the Eye diſcovers any new, pleaſing, or ridiculous object, it preſently brings news thereof unto the Heart; and that debates and ſtudies upon it, to the grieving of Gods

(c) *Reſpexit oculus & ſenſum mentis evertit; audivit auris, intentionem inflexit; inhalavit odor & cogitationem impedivit, os libavit & crimen retulit; tactus contulit & ignem adolevit. Intravit mors per feneſtram: Feneſtra tua eſt oculus tuus.* Ambr. de fug. ſeculi. c. 1.

Spirit,

Spirit, and cooling of our own: and when that is over, a freſh ſight preſents it ſelf, and the Eye is ready for that again, and leads the Heart into a maze of Follies. We read, *Lam.* 3. 51. *My Eye affecteth my Heart, becauſe of all the Daughters of the City*, that's with grief for their Calamity. There is a reciprocal working it ſeems; the Heart at firſt affects the Eye, and the Eye can affect the Heart with Grief: even in like manner, when the Sons or Daughters of the City enter the Aſſembly, the (*d*) Eye affects the Heart; ſtirs, diverts, kindles the Heart; and the Heart corrupts, ſtains, and tranſmits its follies by the Eye; the precious Soul (that while) ſuffering between them, and the holy God and his Service wofully ſlighted.

(d) There was once a contention between the Eye and the Heart, whether of them was the cauſe of Sin: after long arguing it was concluded that the Heart was the Cauſe, the Eye the Occaſion. The moſt vicious Senſe, and therefore ſooneſt decays, and is made the ſeat of Tears.

You reſolve in this duty, I will not ſwerve from God, nor ſtep aſide into the leaſt *Diſtraction*; but you bolt the door, and let your Enemy in at the window (*e*). The thoughts that are ſhut out at the Street door, ſteal in at the back door, if you do not as well *make a Covenant with your Eyes*,

(e) *Si per anticam ejicias, per poſticam denuò ſolent irrepere.*

as keep your Feet, when you enter into the House of God. In this sense the *Woman* and Man also, had need of the *Covering* of an holy and constant Watch, *because of the Angels*; the wicked Imps of Hell, that ride abroad in the air, to carry away our Hearts from God.

SECT. II.

§. 2. The matter of Distractions. *Bernard* makes three sorts of them, Impertinent, Worldly, Sinful. He compares the first to *locum simplex*, the second to *limus*, that stick to the heart, the third to *cœnum*, that are stinking and noysome in the sight of God. *Bern. de tr. gen. Cog't.*

SEcondly, *Distractions are distinguished by the Matter whereof they consist*; which is sometimes,

1. *Good.* It is Satans ambition and triumph, when he can affront God with his own matters; As to bring in shreds of Sermons in the heat of Prayer; and long passages which you have read, to keep out material points, that you should be hearing: He will hold your Husbands Picture before you, while you should look on your Husbands face, and at length delude you with Shadows instead of Substance. A good thing in its *nature*, may become a bad thing in its *use*, when it is out of season. Jewels mis-placed may grow worthless; a

Diamond

Diamond on the Finger is an Ornament, but in the Bladder a Torment: And God dislikes his own things in the *Devil's* way, little less than the *Devil's* things themselves.

As when one is playing in consort, (it is Mr. *White's* comparison) if we stay on any Note, while they who play the other parts go on; that which at first made excellent harmony, becomes now harsh, and spoils the Musick: So those thoughts that were sweet and musical, while they were suitable and pertinent to thy prayer, become harsh by dwelling unseasonably upon them.

2. Sometimes our wandrings are made up of things * *Indifferent* in themselves; and these things by miss-timing them, are debauched, and made very evil and offensive unto God. As to talk with, or to see a Friend, is in it self indifferent; but to perform this in the heat of Harvest, may be folly. There are an hundred harmless thoughts both of things and persons, which crowding into the sacred presence of God, and interposing between the Soul and its Maker, while the matters of Eternity are debating and concluding, are a great offence, and deserve to be whipt, and posted, and sent away.

* *Sunt enim nonnullæ cogitationes penitus ociosæ & ad rem non pertinentes quas tam facilè abjicere quàm recipere facile possit anima dummodo sit secum habitans in corde suo & assistens dominatori universæ terræ.* Ber. Serm. de tr. gen. cogit.

3. The *matter* of them *sometimes* is absolutely *Bad*, proud, wanton, malicious Thoughts: Blasphemous thoughts, as whether God is, when we are praying to him, and the like. Able to sink us at any time, but sins of a double dye in the Worship of God; because there the special and piercing Eye of God is upon us: As Theft therefore is pœnal in all places, by reason of its intrinsecal evil, much more criminal is it, before a Judge in the Court: Even so are these thoughts guilty and base any where, but when they shall dare to intrude into the presence of the Judge of Heaven and Earth, as it were daring a jealous God, this is prodigious Sin, and greatly provokes him. So *Ezek.* 33. 31. *They come unto me as the People cometh, and they sit before me as my People; with their mouths they shew much love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.* What more sweet than a religious Mouth? What more bitter than a covetous Heart? Especially when the Heart *goeth out* after Covetousness, pursues and follows it in the sight of God: Oh dreadful! God, he is pursuing and following the Sinner with Christ and Mercy in his Arms, and the Sinner (the while) with his very Heart, is going after his Sin. And thus

thus that Houſe which God calls the *Houſe of Prayer*, we make a Den of Luſt, Malice, Covetouſneſs, and Sin.

SECT. III.

THirdly, *Diſtractions are diſtinguiſhed by their Adjuncts.* For, §. 3. The Adjuncts of Diſtractions.

1. *Some are ſudden.* As the Church, *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my Soul made me like the Chariots of* Amminadib; and happy is that Soul, that is ſo ſweetly and ſuddenly carried after *Jeſus Chriſt.* So ſometimes * our treacherous Soul, ere we know or are aware of it, makes us like thoſe haſty Chariots; which miſery comes about through want of watchfulneſs, which like a Porter ſhould keep the door, and turn all ſtraglers away: A thought is a ſudden motion, and by it we may quickly ſtep into Heaven or Hell; Now theſe Thoughts do ſteal in ſo ſuddenly, that we fall to muſe how they came in, by what door they entred, and ſo are intangled in more Diſtractions by tracing the former, and commit new Errors by diſcovering the old.

* Theſe are *cogitationes onerosæ quibus reſiſtere vult & tamen non poteſt, ſed velit nolit, irruit in oculos mentis muſcarum peſtilentia & perſtrepunt ranæ in penetralibus cordis ejus.* Bern. lib. de Conſe. c. 5.

But now other wandrings are more *pre-*

meditate, and whereinto the ſoul falls more leiſurely, and wallows therein either of choice, or without much interruption; and theſe have much more guilt and miſchief in them.

2. Some Diſtractions are *Unwilling*, quite *præter intentionem agentis* *; when the Heart like a good Archer aims directly at Communion with the Lord; aims at this, but Satan or his Corruptions jog him at the elbow, and make him to miſs the mark. This indeed is a ſad diſappointment, for a Noble Soul to embrace the Dunghil inſtead of the Sun of Righteouſneſs; for a man to loſe thoſe ſweet words and minutes which might be had with God; it is a ſad miſchance indeed, but which is common with man, wherein if the ſoul cry out as the forced Virgin, *Deut.* 22. 27. it ſhall not be imputed to her, eſpecially when there was neither previous provocation, nor ſubſequent conſent. And this is the caſe of blaſphemous thoughts, which are like Lightning caſt into a Room, which carries horrour, but ſprings from no cauſe thereof in the Room: So theſe thoughts come in upon thee, amaze and terrifie, ſurprize thee againſt thy will: But be of good Comfort; neither leave off thy Duties, (thy Prayers will do thee more

* Of theſe Mr. *Capel* thus: While thy prayer comes out of a ſpiritual habit of grace, and be ſet on work at firſt by an actual intention of the mind, a vertual intention may ſerve all along after, though there be ſome roving thoughts, I ſay may ſerve to make them currant at the Throne of Grace, and in the Court of Conſcience. p. 121.

more good, than theſe can do thee harm) nor haſten from them to gratifie Satan; for if God be not able to protect thee in the diſcharge of thy duty, it's time to think of another Maſter; but complain of Satan to God, parly not with them, but divert thy thoughts, and cry up that God the more, whom he tempts thee to blaſpheme.

But others are *willing* Diſtractions, which are the ordinary effect of an unſpiritual and unprepared Heart: To ſuch an Heart the whole Duty is a Diſtraction: When a vain and earthly Soul like a truant Scholar, keeps out of his Maſters ſight out of choice, and with content, and is any where better than at his Leſſon: What little Reſt would ſuch a *Soul* find in *Heaven?* Or what true delight can he take in the moſt holy preſence of God *above*, that can find no reſt and ſweetneſs in his preſence *below?*

3. Again, ſome Diſtractions are *long*, and do conſiſt of a concatenation of vain thoughts, when they do lodge in the heart. The Lord ſtill calling at the door, and ſaying, *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Theſe do much alter the complexion of the *Soul*, and argue too deep an

habit of vanity therein. It is a true saying, Though we cannot hinder the Birds from flying over our heads, yet we may disturb their roosting or making Nests in our hair. So though we cannot well hinder the sudden suggestion of a vain thought, yet we may trouble its quiet resting in the Soul. Yet such strange subtilty is there in us, that we can keep God in play a long time (yea when our selves are employed in a Prayer) and be tampering with the world or sin all the while, the soul never coming in, till the *Amen* of a Prayer do awaken us*. But other Distractions are but *short*, only a step out of the way, and in again, and the soul catcheth the faster hold of God. And indeed when the soul doth *follow hard after God* (as every one should do in his service) though it stumble, as it often happens to the most earnest in the way, yet it recovers to its advantage, being more zealous after; The fall of the former being like that of the *Swine*, who lyes still in her mire; The fall of the latter,

* *Cedrenus* writes of *Theophylact* a Patriarch of *Constantinople* that he kept 2000 horses fed with Dates and Almonds and watred them in Wine, And being on a time, (while he was performing his Office in the Temple of *Sophia*) told in his Ear that his Mare *Phorbante* had foal'd, he broke off his Service, went home to see it, and then came and set in again. What was ill done by him in Person, is not well done by us in spirit.

like

like the *Sheep* that falling riseth, and runs the faster. And thus you have seen the several *kinds* of Distractions, which was the *second general Head.*

CHAP. III.

To Attend on the Lord without Distraction, is our Duty.

SECT. I.

IN the *third place* I shall prove, that *to Attend upon the Lord without Distraction is our Duty,* which will clearly follow by demonstrating, 1. The Possibility of it. 2. The Necessity of it.

Cap. 3. Proves that it is our Duty to Attend on the Lord without Distraction.

§. 1. The possibility of it.

First, *It is Possible thus to serve our God:* the sluggard, it is true, finds a Lyon in his way to every Duty, and nothing is possible, because nothing is welcome. There is no Duty so easie, but can pose the negligent; none so hard, but is facile through Divine grace to the diligent. Perfection herein I assert not, but that we may attain it, in the substance and sincerity thereof is proved.

1. From

1. From the *Precept of God*, The wiſe and merciful God commands nothing, but he finds or makes it poſſible; He moſt truly ſayes, *Viam aut inveniam aut faciam.* His commands are not ſnares but Rules, yea and Helps. When a *Maſter* commands, power and aſſiſtance wait not on his Commands; the Servants ſtrength muſt perform the Maſters will: but here are the commands of *a Father*, which when they outſtrip his childs ſtrength, are ſtill accompanied with his own aſſiſtance; and the chair which the weak child cannot bring in, he helps to fetch himſelf. Now behold the Divine Precept, 1 Sam. 12. 24. *Serve him in Truth with all your Heart.* What truth is there, while we appear to ſerve the Lord, and indeed do not think upon him at all! Or how is that with all the Heart, while there is not half, nor any thereof many times! while we can pray, and plot, and think, and look, and begin our Devotion only at the end of the Duty. Our merciful Father will not impoſe an impoſſible Law upon us. * It may by accident become impoſſible, but it is not ſo in it ſelf.

* *Imperat mihi Deus ut præbeam illi cor meum, & qui a imperant Deo non ſum obediens, mihi ſum rebellis & contrarius, idcirco plura machinatur cor meum uno momento, quàm omnes homines perficere poſſunt uno anno.* Bern. med. c. 8.

2. In

2. In regard of *the power of God* it is possible. Ours is the Duty, but his is the strength. God and his servant can do any thing. When you look on a hard task, and your heart fails you, advance your eye of Faith, and you will find *God* the strength of your heart, Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*; loe here the omnipotency of a worm! If all things, (that is, all my duty) than this among the rest. But you will say, This was an Apostle, a Person of great strength and Grace: yet still the *Acts* were from the man, but the *Strength* was from Christ; for the same person saith, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* Who though he be at the same time *Terrible out of his holy places*, and darts his Curses on them that do his work negligently, yet *the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power to his People*, *Blessed be God*, Psal. 68. 35. He gives, that is, he is ready to give it out, but alas his stock lyes almost dead by him; and none sues to him in good earnest. His Power is at your service, and therefore serve your selves of it.

3. In

3. In regard of *the Promise of God*, This is Possible. To every command there is a Promise *. The command finds us work, the Promise finds us strength. As to this, some think that clause in our *Magna Charta*, Ezek. 11. 19. of *One Heart* is intended this way; wherein the Lord promiseth an united heart to his servants. An hypocrite hath more hearts than one, an heart for his pleasures, an heart for his pride, here and there his affections are straggling, now saith God I will give *one heart*. There is another Promise, Jer. 32. 40. *I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me*; neither in whole nor in part, unless fault be in your selves. Now these promises are *Amen in Christ*, and do belong to every soul that is in Christ; who may claim and have the benefit of them.

* Compare *Deut.* 10. 16. with *Chap.* 30. 6. And so 1 *Joh.* 2. 27, 28.

4. Add hereunto *the Experience* of many servants of God, who by an habit of holy watchfulness, have attained to considerable strength against these Wandrings. Hope of relief makes many complain of their Distractions, when fear of Pride hinders them from divulging their attainments; And that which by the grace

grace of God is possible for others, with the same grace is possible for you.

SECT. II.

SEcondly, *It is necessary*, and therefore no doubt our *duty* to Attend on God without Distractions. It not only *may* be done, but *must* be done, You will say, They are happy that can do it, but they may be safe enough that cannot; Thus the inside and substance of Religion is counted an high attainment, but not Duty. I shall shew therefore that this soul-attendance on the Lord is necessary. §. 2. The necessity of it. Read *Gersons* Distinction of Habitual, Actual, and Vertual Attention of the heart, and consider it well. *Gerson de Oratione. p.* 612.

1. *It is Necessary to the Essence or Being of the Duty*; As the soul is necessary to the Being of a man, the body is no man, but a Corps without it; even so a solemn Duty with a wandring heart, is but the Corpse of a Duty. Lam. 3.41. *Let us lift up OUR HEARTS with our hands to God in the Heavens.* The elevation of the hands signifies nothing, without lifting up the heart with them. If prayer be the * lifting up of the heart, what are words without

* Ἀνάβασις τῆς νοῦ. Damas.

without the heart? * A man may ſpend the ſame time and the ſame words, in a ſerious and in an heartleſs Duty, and yet the latter ſtand for nothing, for want of intenſeneſs and attention. Iſa. 64. 7. *There is none that calleth on thy name, becauſe none ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold on thee.* If a man come to the ſervice of God and do not † excite and ſtir up his ſoul to exerciſe grace, as a man will blow a dull fire; his faith, zeal and humility, if he do not blow them up, but ſuffer his Heart to run at randome, the holy God counts all the reſt, as a Cypher without a figure it ſtands for nothing.*

* *ubi Duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, &c. qui ſunt illi Duo; niſi anima & corpus.* Ambroſ. de inſtit. virg. c. 2.

† Ἀναζωπυρεῖν.

2. *It is neceſſary to comfort in the Duty.* The ſervice of God is a moſt ſweet pot of ointment of a moſt refreſhing odour, The gracious ſoul is refreſhed therein, as in *a bed of ſpices.* Diſtractions are the *dead flies*, Eccleſ. 10. 1. that dropping into this ſweet ointment, cauſe it to ſend forth a ſtinking ſavour, diſpleaſing to God and unpleaſing to the ſoul. Where can the ſoul be better than with God? what ſweeter company, than that which Angels keep; or pleaſant imployment than converſing in Heaven? till a ſort of wandring thoughts ariſe, and like a black cloud quite

* *Tunc Veraciter oramus, quando aliunde non cogitamus.* Bern. de int. Domo: c. 48.

quite hide the ſweet beams of that Sun of Righteouſneſs from the ſoul, and then your comfort is gone. The ſweetneſs of muſick conſiſts in its harmony, when the ſtrings are out of tune, or untuneably toucht, it is but a harſh ſound, there is no muſick: wandring thoughts are like ſtrings out of tune, there is no muſick in that Duty; the Holy Ghoſt goes away and likes it not; * and the ſoul likes it nor, is weary of it, there is no ſweetneſs in that Duty. It is a tried Maxime, *The more ſeriouſneſs, the more ſweetneſs*; the neerer to God, the warmer and merrier is the ſoul, which inward comfort is ſome reward to the heart of a Chriſtian, when his particular ſuit is denyed; ſo that *IN keeping of Gods Commandments there is a great reward.* The choiceſt of the Spirits ſealing comforts, are beſtowed in the lively ſervice of God.

3. *It is neceſſary to the proſperity of a Duty.* Pſal. 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer.* In Gods ſervice the ſoul ſhould be regarding God alone. If I regard a *Corruption* inſtead of *Chriſt*, If when ſome vain object preſents it ſelf, I turn my back on God to treat with vanity, the Lord will not hear

* *Neque enim agnoſci poterit à ſpiritu ſancto ſpiritus iniquinatus —aut impeditus à libero, nemo adverſarium recipit, nemo niſi comparem ſuum admittit.* Tert. de orat. p. 135.

hear me, nor regard me. We read 1 *Sam.* 1. 13. of that gracious *Hannah*, that *she spake in her heart, only her lips moved not, her voice was not heard*; yet this wordless prayer did the business; Lip-labour, if no more, is but lost labour, * The sweating and labouring of the heart prevails. The Lord our God hath a book of remembrance for them *that think* on his name, while he turns the deaf ear to them that cry Lord, Lord, and do not inwardly adore him. In short, thus saith the Lord God, *Ezek.* 14. 4. *Every man* (Child or not Child) *that setteth up his Idols in his heart —— and cometh to the Prophet*, (sits demurely before the Preacher) *I the Lord will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his Idols.* He that sets his heart on vanity, vanity shall be his recompense; If he will not affect his own Heart, he shall never affect mine. *He that withdraws his Heart in asking, will find the Lord to withdraw his Hand in giving what he asks.

* *Deus autem non vocis, sed cordis auditor est, sicut conspector.* Tert. de oratione p. 154.

* As long as *Moses* held up his hand, *Israel* prevailed, and no longer.

4. *It is necessary to communion with Jesus Christ in a Duty.* Which though it be a Riddle to unregenerate men, yet is the very business and next end of the Worship of God; which if you lose, that Duty

Duty is lost. Jesus Christ calls, Cant. 2. 14. *O my Dove* —— *let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely.* Now if, when he waits thus to be gracious, you wait not for his grace, nor watch for the blessed appearances of the Holy Ghost, you will lose that happiness, you'l lose your labour, and at length your souls. How are you troubled, that you are abroad when some * good customer comes to your shop, It troubles you when that is bestowed with another, that was intended for you. O Sirs, the spirit of God is a good Customer, and when he comes and you are away, you are absent to your loss; and therefore keep at home the next time.

* *Mora. Lect. p.* 467.

How unmannerly would it be for the Subject to knock at his Princes Chamber, and (knowing he is within, and waits for him) step away about some frivolous trifle, when he hath done? The Prince appears, opens his royal door, and calls; but the Clown is gone. How fairly may he shut his door against such a guest, and make him dance attendance long enough, before he see his face*? Ah how seldome do we see the face of

* *Curamus igitur non passibus corpor's sed affectibus sed desiderijs, quia non solum* Angeli, *sed & Angelorum* Creator *nos expectat.* Bern. Med. c. 6.

God in an Ordinance, or much endeavour it? Psal. 63. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee*, The Hebrew * *is glued to thee.* That soul and that alone that follows hard after God by the earnest intenseness of zeal and love, that cannot be content without him, that heart shall cleave to him, and have rare communion with him.

* דָּבַק *agglut'natit.*

Thus you may plainly see, that to attend on the Lord without Distraction is a Duty, which is the *Third Point* to be handled.

Cap. 4. Reasons of the Doctrine.

CHAP. IV.

Reasons why we ought to Attend on the Lord without Distraction.

SECT. I.

§. 1. From the Nature of God.

THE *fourth Point* is to shew the Reasons for the Doctrine and Duty of Attending on the Lord without Distraction. And they are drawn 1. From the Nature of God. 2. From the Nature of his Worship. 3. From the Nature

ture of our condition. 4. From the Nature of Distractions.

The first reason is taken from the *Nature of God*, each of his Attributes plead for this, especially,

1. *The greatness of God.* The greater the Personage, the greater the Reverence, and the more solemn your attendance is. * Hence *Elihu* cryes, Job 37. 19. *Teach us what we shall say to him, for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.* It is a bold adventure to speak to him, what is it then to trifle with him? † wilt thou speak to God, nay pray to God, and not so much as look that way when thou speakest to him? This is to put on him the robes and title of a King and use him like a slave. A Prince may converse with two or three of his servants at a time, but it's Impudence for a servant to talk to two or three Princes at a time. The great *Jehovah* can speak with thee, and a thousand more, and do all your errands at a time, but alas! thou art too poor a worm, to entertain the great *Jehovah*, and other matters at once. We are his Creatures, Isa. 45. 11. *Thus saith the Lord the holy one of Israel and his Maker.* If a servant must not be frivolous before his *Master*, when

* *Qui apud Cæsarem dicere audent, magnitudinem ejus ignorant; qui non audent, humanitatem.*

† Ἐυχὴ δ' καλὴ, ἡ ἐναργῆ, &c. *Atqui illa bona est oratio, quæ manifestam* Dei *notionem in animis nostris ingenerat. Deus verò in nobis inhabitare dicitur, cum eum intus insedentem memoriâ complectimur.* Basil conc. 9. de Oratione.

when he is receiving his commands, who dares be so before his *Maker*, who can as easily reward or ruine us, as I can turn over a leaf in this Bible? This Himself gives for the reason of that dreadful curse, *Mal.* 1. 14. upon the *Deceiver*, *that having a Male in his flock, offers to God a corrupt thing. For I am a great King saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the Heathen.* Which of you will be thinking of your wives, or children, or ground, when you are offering a Petition to a great King, or run after Feathers, when he is saying his mind to you? Thou takest God to be such a one as thy self, or else thou wouldest never do it. Remember a great *God* must be worshipped with profound veneration, and the most serious affections. A man must worship God, as if he were in Heaven; Oh if thou were there among those myriads of Saints and Angels, with what care, and humility, and instance, wouldest thou pour out thy heart to him, or hear his words to thee*.

** Quantâ humilitate accedere debet è paludi suâ repens ranunculus viliis? quam supplex — quam solicitus & totus animo intentus.* Bern. de quat. mot. orand.

2. The *Holiness of God* is another Reason, who is so sacred, that an unholy Thought is abomination to him; most especially in his holy Service. Who can by an eye of Faith behold the *Lord sitting on*

on a Throne high and liſted up, and his train filling the Temple, And the Seraphims crying one to another, and ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts, Iſa. 6. 1, 2. * and ſuffer his heart to be raviſht away with tranſitory toyes in ſuch a Sacred preſence? Are the *Seraphims* amazed at his holineſs, and we untranſported? Their thoughts are continually terminated upon him, And ſhould ours be allwayes flinching from him? The Holy *Lord of Hoſts* will not brook it. If you will not ſanctifie him, he will ſanctifie himſelf. If you that worſhip him, will not bear witneſs by your ſerious attendance to his Holineſs, He muſt bear witneſs to it by his Judgements on You: which indeed are not alwayes viſible, but ever certain; not a man in the Congregation, but the Holy *God* is Sanctified by him, or upon him. Little do we know, what inviſible dreadful effects there are of this, daily in our Congregations. And if our dear *Redeemer* did not ſtand as a ſkreen between us and his wrath, the beſt of us would quickly feel the effects of his Diſpleaſure.

* *Nec ab ira ſolummodo, ſed omni omnino conſultione animi liberam debet eſſe orationis intentio, de tali ſpiritu cum ſit qualis eſt ſpiritus ad quem mittitur.* Tertul. de Orat. p. 153.

3. The *Omniſcience of God* is a valid reaſon againſt Diſtractions. Heb. 4. 13. *All*

things are naked and opened to him, with whom we have to deal, not only naked on the outside of us, but cut up and anatomised in the inside. That sharp and piercing * eye looks through and through us, and neither doth or can look beside us. Whither can I goe from thy spirit? and whither can I flee from thy presence? shall the Husband fix his eye on his Wife, and she (that while) dart her glances on her Paramour? Is this reasonable or tolerable? Get out of his sight, and trifle on. Steal into some corner where he sees you not, and be truants and spare not. Be but an Eye-servant to God, and wee'l ask no more. Be serious while He sees you; dally not while he holds you the candle. A curious Eye requires a carefull servant †.

* Deus est totus oculus, videt omnia, Gen valiter sine exceptione, evidenter sine dubitatione, immutabiliter sine oblivione.

† Quid potest ab homine aliquid esse secretum, nihil Deo clausum. Interest animis nostris & cogitationibus medius intervenit, Seneca. For which saying Zuinglius calls him virum Sanctissimum.

Object. But this is spoken *gratis*, I see no body but the Minister and People, *seeing is believing*, I know no body that seeth me.

Answ. 1. No more doest thou see that faculty by which *thou seest*. Is there therefore

fore no ſuch faculty? Is there no ſpirits, becauſe thou never ſaweſt them? when did you ſee the wind, and yet you doubt not of it. Nay hath not he declared to thee, what is thy thought, *Amos* 4. 13. in many a Sermon?

2. There is another eye by which Gods *Ordinance Preſence* is ſeen, which thou haſt not. That is an eye of Faith, which if fixed in thy heart would quickly make thee cry, *How dreadful is this place? This is no other, than the houſe of God, and the Gate of Heaven.* If an hundred credible perſons affirm, they ſaw a Great man in the Congregation, you would believe them, though not ſeen by you, and would conclude it your own inadvertency. Hundreds there daily are, that do avouch, they ſaw, felt, heard, imbraced the gracious preſence of *God*, and therefore conclude it your Blindneſs, not his Diſtance that you ſaw him not.

SECT. II.

§. 2. From the Nature of his Worſhip.

THE ſecond Reaſon is taken from the *Nature of his Worſhip*,

1. It is *Reaſonable Worſhip*; not only conſonant to the Rules of Reaſon, and backed by the moſt Rational Principles, but muſt be managed as a * Rational Act. Now it is a moſt irrational thing to converſe with God without an Heart; This is a filly thing, as Hoſ. 7. 11. *Ephraim is called a ſilly Dove, without Heart.* A Dove, without ſpirit; and a ſilly Dove, without reaſon or judgement. *God* had rather hear the roaring of a Lyon, than an heartleſs prayer: He delights more in the chirping of birds, than in ſinging of Pſalms without underſtanding; for theſe do what they can, and ſo are accepted, but bruitiſh ſervice from a reaſonable Creature is intolerable. Is it † reaſon you ſhould cry out for the ſpirit, and think on the fleſh? be hearkning about another world, and ruminating on this? your eyes directed to Heaven, and your Heart in the ends of the Earth? the tongue buſie, and the ſoul idle? the knee devout, and the thoughts looſe? there is no coherence, no reaſon

* *Oratio eſt mis rat'o.* Hierom. ad Cypr. p. 98.

† The Ægytians choſe among all fruits the Peach to offer to their gods, becauſe the Fruit is like a mans Heart; the leaf like his tongue, Heart and tongue ſhould go together, *Er.*

reaſon in this. When ye work, work, and when ye pray, pray, and do it † with underſtanding, 1 Cor. 14. 15. *What it is then! I will pray with the ſpirit, and will pray with the underſtanding alſo; I will ſing with the ſpirit, and will ſing with the underſtanding alſo.*

† *Habet ubiq; cubiculum tuum. Cubiculum tuum mens tua eſt.* Ambroſ. de Sacram. lib. 6.

Conſider, * that elſe thou art as a mad man before God, and God hath no need of mad men: if one ſhould come to thee about buſineſs of life and death, and after a word or two therein, ſhould run from one impertinent thing to another, would you not think him mad? If thy thoughts were put into words and mingled with thy prayers, what ſtrange mad prayers would they be?

* Mr. *White of* Thoughts. *p.* 93.

2. It is *ſpiritual worſhip*, and therefore you may not be diſtracted in it. Joh. 4. 23, 24. *The true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth, for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him.* † Others may ſeek to worſhip the Father, but the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him, to wit, that worſhip in Spirit and in Truth; *In Spirit*, and ſo not like the for-

† *ubi pu-tas Sacrificia juſtitiæ Sacrificari niſi in templo mentis & cubiculis cordis?*

Deus enim in ipſis rationalis animæ ſecretis (qui bono interior vocatur) & quærendus & adorandus eſt. Aug. lib. de magiſtro.

mal

mal Jews, *In Truth*, and ſo not like the ignorant Gentiles. And then verſ. 24. *God is a Spirit, and muſt be worſhipped.* Here's Muſt and Shall, and Reaſon for it. As a ſpirit can do nothing at eating; ſo a carkaſs can do nothing at praying. The eleganteſt tongues on earth cannot take one ſtroak at prayer; no, the ſoul muſt be in it, and the ſoul muſt be buſie too*. If we had only an *Idol* to ſerve, the body were enough, but *God* is a ſpirit and cannot be converſed with without the ſpirit, yea and the whole ſpirit alſo. Fond man, that thinks with his narrow ſoul to deal with *God* and ſomewhat elſe, who alone is immenſe and beyond our greateſt capacity. He muſt be taken up, and go out of the world *in a ſenſe* that will get into Heaven. The ſoul on the lip, and the ſoul in the ear, do rid work in the ſervice of *God*.

* Οὐ γὰρ ἁπλῶς τὰ ῥήματα τῆς προσευχῆς ὠφελεῖ, &c. neque enim ipſa orationis verba per ſe ſolâ proſunt quidpiam: at ita demum juvant, ſi ex animo ac ſtudioſo mentis affectu emittantur. Baſil. conc. 9. de oratione.

3. It is *ſweet work.* Pſal. 138. 5. *Yea, they ſhall ſing in the wayes of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord:* mark [*ſhall ſing*] their ſpirits ſhall neither droop nor ſtep aſide. He that attends on the *Lord* hath a moſt ſweet imployment: now the mind uſeth not to ſtraggle at moſt rare muſick, or under an enchanting

enchanting ſong. *Alexanders* great ſoul, yet is ſaid *exilire è convivio* under the charms of Muſick. O the gracious preſence of *God!* his ſweet ſmiles! and bleſſed love-tokens, that can tranſport *Angels*, ſure they may ingage the heart of man, and ſufficiently fill it.

Read the *Canticles* and ſay then, Is not converſe with *God* an Heaven upon Earth? and how far is Heaven from diſtracted thoughts? ſad and ſevere things afflict the mind, It would flit from ſuch ſubjects; but ſweet imployment ingages all the heart: next dwelling in Heaven, is the ſoul flying to Heaven in an Ordinance; Our dryeſt Duties yield us leaſt comfort: The nearer the Sun, the warmer. More cloſe to *God* more ſweet you'l find him, and never more *joyful than in the Houſe of Prayer.*

SECT. III.

THE third reaſon is taken from the *Nature of our Condition*, and that is this, §. 3. From the Nature of our condition.

1. *We cannot live without God.* In him we live as to our natural life, every breath is

is fetcht from Him; ſo in our ſpiritual life, the life of the ſoul is He that made it. A world without a Sun, is dark; a body without a ſoul, is dead; but a ſoul without *God*, is dark, is dead, is damned: Its true, men feed, and ſing, and make a ſhift without *God in the World*, but he that lives truly lives by faith; the other life Beaſts live, they eat, and drink, and work, but know not God; but if you will define the life of a ſoul, *God* muſt be in the beginning, in the midſt, and in the end of it.

2. *Our only way of communion with God is in an Ordinance* *. This is the River, the ſtreams whereof make glad the heart. Were a City beſieged by mortal enemies round about, and no relief to be conveyed, but by the River that waters it; how fatal to the City would the ſtopping of that River be? that City muſt ſtarve, or yield: The ordinary ſupplies that a Chriſtian cannot be without, come ſwimming down from Heaven through the Ordinances of God; Diſtractions ſtop the River, hinder Prayer from aſcending to God, hinder inſtruction from deſcending into the heart, intercept commerce and ſtarve the ſoul. The zeal of the *Jews* was eminent this way,

* *Non magis competit animalibus perfecti's reſpiratio, quàm Oratio Chriſtian's, qui vivunt per fidem, ſpirant per preces.* Dr. Arrowſmith.

way, of whom *Joſephus* relates, that when *Pompey*'s Souldiers ſhot at the thickeſt of them in the ſiege of *Jeruſalem*, yet amidſt thoſe arrows, did they go and perform their rites, as though there had been peace: why, thy Prayer is thy Embaſſador, Diſtractions cut off the feet, and Prov. 26. 6. *He that ſendeth a meſſage by the hand of a fool, cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage.* A wandring Prayer is a meſſage by the hand of a fool, and that man is like to drink damage that uſeth it: A man is a poor thing without God, and *God* is not ordinarily met with but in an Ordinance.

3. *All our ſtrength and Heart is too little for this buſineſs.* All our underſtanding too little to apprehend his rare perfections; All our affections too weak and ſhallow, to love, imbrace and delight in him; hence, *Mark.* 12. 33. we are obliged to *love, and ſo to ſerve the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, and with all our ſtrength,* * that is, with every faculty of the ſoul, and with

* *unuſquiſque ergo cum in oratione, vel Pſalmos ——— decantat, diligenter conſideret cui affectui ſervivat, & ad illum affectum* Toto Niſu cor ſuum excitet, *ad quem id, quod loquitur, magis pertinere videt.* Hugo de S. Vict. de modo orandi. c. 5.

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the utmoſt ſtrength of every faculty. Now if it be hard enough to climb the hill unto *God* with wings; how ſhall we aſcend with theſe weights about us, or think to pleaſe with half an heart, when the whole is too little? for *he is a great King and his name is dreadful among the Heathen*; when all the water in the pool will but turn the Mill, that Miller is a fool, that by twenty Channels lets out the Water other wayes: The intenſe and earneſt heart is little enough to converſe with God, all the water in our Pool will but turn the Mill. What then can the remiſs heart bring to paſs, and how unlikely are we to obtain with the great God, with the negligent approaches of a trivial ſpirit, with a little part of a little heart*?

* *Fer autem non poteſt ut aliquando cum Deo loquatur, qui cum toto mundo etiam taceus fabulatur.* Bern. Med. c. 6.

SECT. IV.

§. 4. From the Nature of Diſtractions.

THe fourth Reaſon is taken from the *Nature of Diſtractions.*

1. *They divide the Heart,* * *and diſable*

* *Hoc eſt vigilare oculis & corde dormire, cum debeat Chriſtianus, & cùm dormit oculis, corde vigilare; ſicut Sponſa* Cant. 5. Cyprian de Oratione.

it

it wholly; now a divided heart can do nothing at all, Hoſ. 10. 2. *Their heart is divided, now ſhall they be found faulty*; If one heart divided from another make a fault, much more faulty is one heart divided within it ſelf. Hence it comes to paſs, that Satan offers, as the falſe Mother did about the living Child, 1 King. 3. 26. *Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it*, If he cannot block your way to the preſence of God, and make good his claim to the living Child, as She would have done; then with might and main, he furthers all imaginable diverſions to part the Soul; and cryes, Lord let it be neither thine nor mine, but divide it; well knowing, that (as the Child, ſo) the heart while intire, is a living and lively heart, but divide it and deſtroy it; As he that runs at once after two Hares, catches neither, ſo two buſineſſes at once, ſpoils both. He that thinks to treat the Creator and the creature at the ſame time, enjoyes neither of them: And thus the vain heart of man by overdoing, undoes it ſelf, and reaching at two matters, ſpoils them both.

2. *Theſe Diſtractions fruſtrate the Ordinance*; and cauſe the great name of *God* to be taken in vain. Inſtead of forcing the

the Heavens, these do but beat the air, and cannot reach the Heart of God, * because they never reach your own. And this is one of the follies of a roving heart, that it consumes as much time in a senseless as in a serious Duty, and yet doth nothing in it, brings nothing to pass. And so the Holy God stands over the heedless sinner with *Jobs* words, Job 16. 3. *When shall Vain words have an End?* I am weary with this tinkling Cymbal, either pray in earnest, or pray not at all: hear in earnest, or hear not at all: As good not at all, as never the better. The service of *God* requires a man, not a shadow, yea all a man, and more than a man, our spirits, and Gods spirit also. Those that tremble at the prophane mans taking Gods name in vain, should make a Conscience, lest they do it themselves; lest They be damned for their Oaths, and You for your prayers; because you wrong Gods Majesty under the pretence of serving him, and so affront him with more solemnity.

* *Vis esse Deum memorem tui cùm rogas, quando tu ipse memor tui non sis? Quomodo te audivi à Deo postulas, cùm te ipse non audias.* Cyprian. de Orat. Dom.

3. *They contract more sin upon the Soul.* We read, *Levit.* 10. 1. That Nadab *and* Abihu, *the sons of* Aaron *took either of them his Censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the*

the Lord. And the Lord took it in high diſdain, and *with ſtrange fire conſumed them* *. Sins of Ordinances are often extraordinary ſins; as Sacriledge is a greater ſin, than plain theft, becauſe it is a purloyning of what is conſecrated; ſo a ſin in worſhip hath this aggravation, that it's in a place and preſence and buſineſs, that is ſet apart for communion with God. Hence it comes to paſs, that many of Gods Children have had grievous pangs and terrour of Conſcience on their death-bed, for ordinance-ſins. He that ſhould be ſcoring out his ſins, and inſtead of that ſcores on more, makes his ſin exceeding ſinfull. O what need then have we to pray, Pſal. 119. 39. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding Vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.*

* *Sua oſferunt Deo, ſeipſos Diabolo.* Bern.

And theſe are ſome of the *Reaſons*, that confirm and inforce this Practical Doctrine, That we ſhould attend upon the Lord without Diſtractions; and ſo you have the *fourth general Head.*

Cap. 5. Objections answered.

CHAP. V.

Objections Answered.

SECT. I.

§. 1. Its impossibility.

BUT because there is no Duty so clear that our sinfull hearts will embrace, if any shew of contradiction can be produced; I shall wipe away all Possible Objections against this Duty, which is the *Fifth general Head* to be handled.

Object. 1. *It is Impossible* thus to Attend on God without distractions. Such is the Variety of objects, such the imbecillity of our Nature, such the weakness of our Graces, such the suddenness and swiftness of a thought, that none but Angels can do this. You press impossibles, it can never be.

Answ. 1. Though this objection hath been prevented before, yet seeing it recurs again, I answer,

1. Perfection herein is impossible in this life: not but that a prayer or other Ordinance may be attended with that intenseness,

tenſeneſs, as to exclude every wandring thought that would ſtep in; but to be perfectly free in every Duty from them, is rather to be wiſhed, than hoped for in this life. That *Angelical* perfection is reſerved for Heaven, This *Evangelical* perfection may be here attained, which is the prevalence of grace againſt them; and not only a will but a watch and an endeavour to be utterly rid of them.

2. And in this ſenſe, there is no divine precept impoſſible: Though our Lord Jeſus ſaith, Joh. 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing*, yet the Apoſtle finds, Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things through him, that ſtrengthneth me.* If all things, then why not this! Though it were impoſſible *ex parte Rei, in its ſelf*, yet is it poſſible *ex parte Dei, with Gods help*, we are prone to think that we can compaſs eaſie things by our own ſtrength, and that difficult things are too hard for God. Have you ever tryed to the utmoſt what *God* and you can do! could not you have heard a Sermon better, if a naked ſword had hang'd by a ſingle twiſt over your bare heads; and have prayed more cordially, if you had ſeen every word you prayed, written down by the hand of God. The ſame circum- *Anſw.* 2.

ſpection that keeps a Diſtraction out of one ſentence, might (were you faithful therein) keep it out of two or ten or twenty, and he that can be temperate for a day, might be temperate every day, if he did his beſt*.

* Mr. *Jo. Ball* would often ſay, He would undertake to prove, That a Moral Heathen might poſſibly by his circumſpection ſecure himſelf from uttering one froward word all his life long.

3. It is a mixture of cowardize and ſloth, that makes it impoſſible. It is an argument of a ſlothful heart to ſay, *There is a Lyon in the way*, O *there is a Lyon in the ſtreets*, Prov. 26. 13. yet if there were a Lyon in the way to Heaven, thou muſt rather run upon him, than run from God. There is a worſe Lyon will meet you in the way to Hell. No, no; it's not the danger without, but the dulneſs and ſlothfulneſs within, that Creates the impoſſibility. How many hundreds out of fearfulneſs and idleneſs, have reſtrained Prayer before God; till being ſoundly awaken'd they ſet about prayer; and found it both feaſable and delightful? Religion in the power of it, is a work of pains. If you will not ſweat for Heaven, you muſt never have it: try but the next duty with your beſt Diligence, and you ſhall find it poſſible

sible to the power of Grace, which looks impossible to the strength of Nature.

SECT. II.

Obj. 2. *IT is Difficult:* if it be not impossible, yet it's very hard, It's a lesson for the upper form in the School of *Jesus Christ*. We mean schollars need not attempt it, because we cannot attain it: as good to sit still, as rise up and fall. This is too hard for us. §. 2. Its Difficulty.

Answ. 1. This argues the excellency of it, the more hard, the more honourable, and therefore this should rather whet, than dull thy courage. If you except all hard points out of the practice of piety, you will leave but few to be practised; It is the idle Schollar, that skips over the hardest words of his lesson, but the rod must fetch him back unto them: neither must you expect that God will take any notice of your easie duties, if you turn off the hard; he could have servants enough to do his easie work, but Religion must go all together, and almost Christianity will not serve the turn. *Answ.* 1.

2. The way to Heaven is hard, and this *Answ.* 2.

you were told at first: Mat. 7. 14. *Because strait is the Gate and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life.* If you like it not, let it alone, but see you exchange for the better. To get a Kingdom is not easie, it's easie to lose one. Who gets a race without sweating, or victory without bleeding, or Heaven without striving? Hence Mr. *Latimer* to one that objects against the duty he was pressing, (which was that Landlords should send for their Tenants and end differences among them) that this were a good work indeed, but marvellous hard. O saith he, my friend, *It is an hard matter to be a Christian.* Heaven was never gotten yet without violence, and there is no new way found of coming there. But if *Christ Jesus* had not done harder work than this for thee, thou must never have come there.

Answ. 3. 3. And is there no hardship in attending upon sin? Is it an easie thing to serve the Devil? Wise *Solomon* saith, Prov. 13. 15. *The way of Transgressors is hard.* Our love to it blinds our eyes, or else he serves an hard service, that dances attendance on any sin; The *Lascivious* man swallows many difficulties, perhaps weeks and moneths together, to continue the pleasure

pleaſure of an hour. How many dark nights doth the *Drunkards* walk, and hard words indure, and hard ſhift make to feed that ſenſleſs luſt! who would digeſt the life of a covetous *wordling?* hard fare, hard work, hard journeys, for what may be conſumed in two hours; to ſay nothing of the life of the envious, the ambitious, the malicious man, whoſe daily bread is mingled not only with ſweat, but gall and bitterneſs; and yet who hears them complain of difficulty, or throw off their deſigns for hardneſs. And is it not far better to conquer difficulties for Heaven than Hell, and venture upon hardſhip for Chriſt and thine own ſoul, than for Satan and thy damnation? eſpecially when Love to the ſervice of *God* would make this yoke as eaſie, as tranſgreſſors labour is to them.

4. Though it be hard to keep off theſe Diſtractions, yet it is neceſſary, It muſt be done. Good *Mary* would not by any buſineſs be Diſtracted in her attendance on Chriſt, *Luk.* 10. 42. and He reſolves therein, that ſhe did the *One needful thing*. Poor men find it hard to work ſix dayes together, but there being a neceſſity of it, there's no excuſe; they *Anſw.* 4.

could find twenty put offs, but it must be done, work or starve. We have the same Dilemma, Pray or perish, and that's not half a Prayer, that's fill'd with Distractions.

Answ. 5. 5. Though it be hard, yet it is sweet, Prov. 3. 17. *Her wayes are wayes of Pleasantness*; and this is one of them. You shall ever observe, the more wandring the heart, the more wearisome the Duty; a Divided heart can taste but partial comfort; and fulness of joy follows, where the full bent of the soul goes before. Our common experience tells us, what peace, what joy, what confidence, what suavity fills the heart, when we have (though with some difficulty) approached the *Lord*, enjoyed him, and attended on him without Distraction *. What is more hard to the brain and body, than study? for pains, a Schollar would choose the Plough before it; the brain, the back, the heart and spirits are pained and spent: yet no employment so sweet, the mind and brain and heart refreshed, and a right Schollar would hardly change employments with a Prince; so sweet, so ravishing is this hard employment. Even so it is with Prayer or any holy Ordinance, the

* The sineness which a Hymne or Psalm affords Is, when the Soul unto the lines accords. *Herbert.*

the sweetness of a watchful serious frame, doth fully compensate the difficulty thereof.

6. Custome and Practice will make it much easier *; He that executes the law on vagrants, though at first he were pestred with them, will after a while with ease be delivered of them: so that resolved Christian, who keeps up his watch and ward awhile, shall find it each day easier than other, to attend on *God* without these vagrant thoughts. Use and custome makes the hardest things easie. As a wise man that converses in the midst of his observing enemies, by *use* is inured to all caution, and can easily avoid all dangerous words or behaviour; though it be hard, he is used to it; so practice will wonderfully facillitate this hard duty. You once thought it impossible for you to Pray, but practice hath made you perfect. The same spirit, by the same help, can and will perfect you in this. This is one of those Infirmities the spirit of God will help.

Answ. 6.

* *Non quia difficilis est non audemus, sed quia non audemus, difficilis.* Seneca.

SECT.

SECT. III.

§. 3. Their Commonneſs. Object. 3. *THe Commonneſs of theſe Diſtractions*; No man but is full of them, All ſerious Chriſtians complain of them. What is ſo ordinary cannot be very evil, theſe vanities that every one hath, I cannot expect to be without, and therefore muſt be content.

Anſw. 1. *Anſw.* 1. This muſt be anſwered with Grief. Every man is full of them, and every Good man is ſick with them. If every mans body were gone after his ſoul, this would ſometimes be an empty Congregation. Every ſolemn look hath not a ſerious heart, and there are but few that make a buſineſs of Prayer; And this is a lamentable thing, that we can hold a diſcourſe with man, or crave a kindneſs, or drive a bargain without a wandring thought; till our face be ſet towards God, and that we begin a duty of Worſhip, and then or ever we are aware, our Soul is ſlipt off her Chariot wheels, and our ſight of God is loſt.

Anſw. 2. 2. And yet ſome watchful Chriſtians (as we obſerved before) have got a good riddance of them, to *accuſe* others is a poor

poor *excuſe* to you. As their humility teaches them to complain of the worſt, ſo your charity ſhould cauſe you to think the beſt: no doubt they that are ſick of them, do by degrees get Phyſick againſt them, and grow better.

3. By this Plea all ſins might be juſtified; Thus *ſwearing* might be advanced before *Praying*, for it is more common than Prayer; *Revenge* is more common than *Forgiveneſs*, but this is no excuſe for it. He that will do as the moſt do, muſt go whither moſt go, Exod. 23. 2. *Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to do evil*, no nor to think evil. If thou wilt be Chriſt's Diſciple, thou muſt be ſerious and attentive, though the whole Congregation trifle. True ſanctity is not grounded on *mens practice*, but on *Gods precept*. Make no apologies but ſuch as you can ſtand to before the face of God. What a poor plea will it be to ſay, I was drunk for company, I ſtragled from God for company, Get thee to Hell for company; that which will be no mitigation of your pain, is no extenuation of your crime. If many diſpleaſe the *Lord*, you have more need to pleaſe him; If many play, you have more need to work, and rather choo:e *Anſw.* 3.

chooſe to be ſaved with a few, than damned with a crowd.

Anſw. 4. 4. In ſuch an univerſal loytering, thy care will be more acceptable; Loyalty is doubly valued and rewarded, where Rebellion is general; and one dutiful Child is cheriſht among many diſobedient. Iſa. 66. 2. *To this man will I look, to him that is poor and contrite and trembleth at my word.* The *Great Jehovah* there overlooks Heaven and Earth, and the Houſe of his reſt, to fix his bleſſed eye on this *man* or *woman*, that when he comes to a Sermon doth not, dare not trifle, but trembles at the word, and that feels every ſentence at his heart. When *Gallants* come into the Congregation then *Man* looks, but when the *poor* trembling Hearer comes in, then *God* looks; The Angels gaze at ſuch gueſts, as vain people do at Silks and Faſhions. O its a rare ſight to ſee a Chriſtian in earneſt, to behold an humble man converſe with God, the *Hoſt of Heaven* riſe up and are taken with it. If therefore it be ſo common to be diſtracted in Duties, do thou diſdain to be in the common faſhion, get quickly into the Mode of Heaven.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

Object. 4. *God will accept the will for the Deed*; I would be free from these temptations, but in this life I cannot, and therefore shall sit down content. God is merciful, though you are strict. And he hath said, 2 Cor. 8. 12. *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* §. 4. Gods accepting the Will for the Deed.

Answ. 1. This axiom and Scripture were never intended as a pillow for the lazy, but a support to the weary; nor to exempt us from our duty, but to comfort us under our weakness. What Parent will accept this answer from a negligent Child? or what Master will be content of this excuse, from a slothful servant? *offer it now to your Governour*, and imagine not, it will pass with God, which would be counted a mockery with men. *Answ.* 1.

2. God never accepts the Will for the Deed, when the Deed may be done; when the *Idem* cannot be paid, the *Tantundem* shall serve; yea and so far as the Deed can be done, the will without it, is but a mockery unto God. But wherein *Answ.* 2.

an

an upright heart hath done its utmoſt in the uſe of all means, and would do more, this will is accepted for the Deed, even as if thou hadſt perfectly obeyed; And ſo that Scripture cited is expreſs in the caſe of charity; *It is accepted according to that a man hath.* So that a man muſt give according to that he hath, or elſe his willing mind ſtands for nothing. Now have you done your utmoſt againſt Diſtractions! can you do no more? If Death ſtood at the end of the Duty, you could double your watch. Plead not this till you have done your beſt*.

* He who craves all the Mind
And all the Soul and ſtrength (and time
If the words only rhyme
Juſtly complains that ſome- (what is behind
To make his Verſe, or write a hymn in kind.
Mr. *Herbert.*

Anſw. 3. 3. It is far from the quality of grace, to ſit down content in any defect or ſin, or to vouch the mercy of God to ſecure the ſoul in any tranſgreſſion: who when he is dreſt in his richeſt garments of mercy, Exod. 34. 7. *Yet will not by any means clear the guilty.* No, it is the Genius of true Grace to be reſtleſs under his defects, if he cannot be rid of them: to rowle up the ſtone, though it tumble ſtill upon him, and cry out and roar under thoſe diſeaſes that are uncurable. After the Apoſtle had told us, Rom. 7. 19. *The good I would, I do not, but the Evil that I would not, that I do.* He lyes not down,

down, and reſolves to let it run, but fights, and ſtrives, and cryes, *O wretched man that I am.* Verſ. 24. *Si dixiſti ſufficit, periiſti.* If thou once ſit down, be content, and ſay, I'le ſtrive no more, thou giveſt the field, The Spirit withdraws with tears, and Satan goes away with triumph.

4. The *Great Jehovah* is ſo far from being content with ſuch a frame, that he hath plainly *curſed all ſuch as do the work of the Lord negligently, or deceitfully*, Jer. 48. 10. Though you neglect not the work of the Lord, yet if you do it negligently, you are in danger of the curſe. Every Diſtraction is a neglect, in each wandring you deal deceitfully with God, and for every of theſe in a Duty, Gods Law pronounceth a Curſe. And is the Divine Curſe inconſiderable with you? who could digeſt an hundred curſes, though pronounced at your door by a provoked neighbour? O how much more intolerable is it, to be obnoxious to an hundred Curſes from Heaven, juſtly deſerved and infallibly inflicted, if Repentance prevent not. It is not the work of the Lord will excuſe you; *Nadab* ſhall periſh with his ſtrange fire, as well as if he had offered nothing at all. Take heed of *Anſw.* 4.

of forgiving your ſelves, when God forgives you not, A negligent Duty is abomination to God.

And thus you have the moſt material Objections anſwered, which is the *fifth Point* handled.

CHAP. VI.

Cap. 6. The Cauſes of Diſtractions.

The Cauſes of Diſtractions, with their Remedies.

SECT. I.

§. 1. WE ſhall now proceed unto the more Practical part of this Subject, namely to find out and ſumm up the cauſes of this Epidemical Diſeaſe, which is the *Sixth Point* to be handled.

The *Firſt Cauſe* of Diſtractions in Gods ſervice is, *Secret Atheiſm* *. There is an *Atheiſm of the Head*, Atheiſm of the Heart, and Atheiſm of the Life. In the firſt, The *Fool hath ſaid in his Head, There*

* Secret Atheiſm. Γίγνεται ὁμετεώρισμος ἀπὸ τῆς ἀργίας τοῦ νοῦ καὶ ἐξ ἀπιστίας μὴ παρεῖναι τὸν θεὸν ἐξετάζοντα καρδίας καὶ νέφρους. Baſil. in reg. brev.

is

is no God, Psal. 14. 1. Mark, it is not, He hath *thought* in his heart, but *says* it by rote to himself; rather as what he would have, than what he doth believe. And of him this is truly said, That the speculative Atheist is the greatest Monster in the world, except the Practical. And our late Divisions, by the help of our corrupt Natures, have proselyted a considerable number to this desperate Opinion: As if the different opinions about the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, should render it doubtful whether the Sea did ebb and flow; or the disputes about the manner of Vision, should call our Sight it self into question: You would think it a fond conclusion to say, Because Philosophers argue much about the sensitive and vegitative Faculties of the Soul, that there is no rational Soul at all, in that these very velitations and debates do argue a rational Soul, by and with which these points are disputed: even so it is notorious madness to conclude, from the variety and diversity of Opinions about Religion and Government, that there is no *God*; seeing you are supported by him, while you dispute and argue about him.

Atheism of the Heart, is, whereby the Fool saith *also in his Heart, There is no God*;

that is, either ſecretly queſtions, or but coldly aſſents to the exiſtence of God, or heartily wiſhes there were none at all. And it is worth obſervation of both theſe, that they are ſuch as are obnoxious to the Divine Majeſty by ſome miſdemeanour: The Felon wiſhes there were no Judge at all, and even theſe are forced in ſome pangs to acknowledge him, at ſome fright by thunder, under ſome horrour of Conſcience, or in the point of death, they are forced to give *Jehovah* his due. And they alſo in any ſudden fright, or great extremity, uſe to cry out, *O God, O Lord*, as earneſtly as others.

Atheiſm of the Life, that's deſcribed, *Tit.* 1.14. *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him.* Now both theſe latter do breed of the firſt, and this laſt is moſt viſible in our Diſtractions: For if thou didſt as verily believe God preſent in an Ordinance, as he that ſits next thee, durſt thou trifle ſo egregiouſly as thou doſt? The Miniſter looks at you, and you dare not talk; if you ſaw him that looks at you from Heaven, you durſt not ſtraggle: And therefore the more or leſs ſtrong our belief is of *God*, the more or leſs lively are we in our applications to him.

Oh

Oh the patience of God! that he can indure the Worm to doubt of him, yea implicitely to deny him, and not demonstrate himself by a Thunderbolt! But the Countrey-man's ignorance of the *Primum Mobile*, doth not nullifie it: no more doth the Atheists Infidelity degrade the *Primus Motor*, the Majesty of Heaven, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He that cometh unto God, must first believe that he is.*

The Remedy of this Cause, is, *Humbly to read the Scripture*, which is the most clear, certain and convincing way to work Faith herein. * Prayer and the Bible have convinc'd more than any other Reasons and recommend me to *Moses* above *Plato*, for the demonstrating a Deity. All that Reason can suggest, might be written by an Infidel; and more Infidels (I trow) have been convinced by reading and hearing the Book of the Christians, than have Christians been settled by reading the Books of Infidels. And therefore although holy *David*, Psal. 19. 1. appeals to the Heavens, and the Host of them, as a most strong Argument to declare God, and so it is; (for what reason but the *hand of a God*, can be rendred, that the Planets being all of one matter, should have contrary motions, seeing

* One in Garson that studied against Atheism, and could not get the better of it, at last fell to Prayer, & thereby grew as really perswaded of the truth of unseen things, as of the Chair he sat in.

ſeeing things of the like matter have by nature like motion?) yet laying that *Topick* aſide, he pitches upon the Law of God, *verſ.* 7. as the moſt perfect and ſure way to demonſtrate a God, and convert and enwiſe a Soul. Then go to God in prayer, and beg him to touch thy Heart, and open thine Eyes, and thou ſhalt quickly ſee him *that is not far from every one of us.*

SECT. II.

§. 2. II. The corruption of our Nature.

THE ſecond *Cauſe* of Diſtractions in the ſervice of God, is, *The corruption of our Nature*, that is, of Soul and Body; ſo that our inward faculties do act our outward ſenſes, and they infect our inward faculties in this buſineſs, * Mat. 15. 19. *Out of the Heart proceed vain and evil thoughts*; are not forced out, as ſparks out of a Flint, but come out thence of themſelves, as ſparks out of a Furnace: View the mind, and its accident is Vanity, and how can a vain Mind be ſerious with God without a great deal of grace? The Heart its name is *Deceitful*, and makes a trade of jugling and purloining in the ſolemneſt Duties; and when the

* *Hoc disco mea experientia quod non habeo tam magna causam timendi extra me qua intra me.* Luth.

the ear receives the word as a *lovely ſong*, ſhe runs *after covetouſneſs* the while. *Now is ſhe without, now in the ſtreets, and lyeth in wait at every corner*, like the lewd woman, *Prov.* 7. 11. The eye that ſhould be fix'd on Heaven, is in the ends of the earth, and gathering a ſtragling notion from every object. The ear by every noiſe calls off the ſoul from its great buſineſs, thus wofully the old man is bent againſt the new man. Rom 7. 23. *The law of the members wars againſt the law of the mind, and leads us into captivity to the law of ſin that is in the members.* When the mind it ſelf is ſet in its moſt hearty purpoſes to wait on God, and offer him a faithfull ſacrifice, then comes in the law of the members, and either ſuggeſts within, or admits from without ſome roving notions, and theſe lead the poor ſoul like that young man, Prov. 7. 21, 22. *forc'd with flatteries, like the ox to the ſlaughter, or the fool to the correction of the ſtocks.* And he that began in Heaven, ends on earth, if not in hell. * Thus the good he would do, he cannot. O wretched man that muſt lead his life with ſuch an heart!

* *Mens humana propter infirmitatem naturæ diu ſtare in Alto non poteſt.* Aquin. 22. q. 83 a. 13.

As if a man were tied ſtill to ſhoot in a warping bow; he ſettles himſelf in his

right poſtures, aims directly at the White, but his warping bow ſtill carries the arrow quite beſides the Butt, and his ſkill is rendred ineffectual: ſo the poor upright Chriſtian in a duty, orders his buſineſs and his heart, as well as ever he can, and aims at the glorifying of God, and getting good to his ſoul; but the corruption of his nature diverts him, and perverts him from his purpoſe. This hinders the elevation of the ſoul, which would fix it in God's ſervice, like one that hath a light heart, and an heavy body; the light heart would flie, the heavy body clips her wings, and will hardly creep. O, ſaith the ſoul, now will I arite and ſoar into heaven; I muſt, I will, ſpeak with my God; my wants are preſſing, my ſins increaſe, Eternity approaches, who will give me the wings of an Eagle? I'le never live ſo far from God, I will away. Thus this *Bird of Paradiſe* takes wing, when behold the ſtone of her corrupt nature hangs at her leg, and weighs her down: ſhe flutters a little, but cannot flie, for her heart ſhe cannot flie, indeed *becauſe of the heart* ſhe cannot flie *.

* As a Fuller and a Collier living in one houſe, what the one whites the other blacks; ſo is Grace and Corruption in our hearts. *M. Strong.*

And not only the dulneſs, but the deceitfulneſs of our corrupt nature furthers our

our diſtractions. For though the heart be deceitful from the beginning to the end of the year, yet her prime and ſubtleſt ſleights are ſhewed in the ſervice of God; where ſhe is put hard to it to ſhift for her ſelf, and therefore uſeth her fineſt notions and ſlieſt fetches to evade the preſence of *God*, and powerful influences of the *holy Ghoſt*. Like ſome ſubtil Thief, that joyns himſelf to the unwary Traveller, and gives him pleaſant company a while, till when he watches his time he draws him with him out of the way, and takes his purſe; before he is aware, he is in a wood, and his purſe is gone. Even ſo, the heart of man takes on to be very willing to prayer, or other good duties, and goes with us a while; but ere we have ſtept twenty ſentences into our work, this deceitful *heart turns us aſide, brings us to feed upon aſhes*, and binds up the faculties, that we *cannot deliver our ſouls, nor ſay, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* Iſa. 44. 20. Now is it not an hell upon earth to live with ſuch a heart, to croſs a man in the midſt of his greateſt buſineſs, diſappoint him in his higheſt expectations, and make him loſe his labour, if not his ſoul?

A man that hath the Palſie, his hand ſhakes, but 'tis againſt his will.

The Remedy againſt this corruption of our Nature is hard. To divert a ſtream is eaſie, but to dry up a ſpring is hard, ſtop it here, and it breaks out there. So to divert and diſcharge a wandring thought is eaſie in compariſon, but the womb of the heart is pregnant; kill one Viper, and there's an hundred more ready for the birth. * We think our wordly buſineſs is the only cauſe of them, but the moſt retired *Hermites* tell us, that an unſanctified or half ſanctified heart can find matter enough of diverſion in a naked Cell. And that the corruption of the ſubject, as well as the bewitching of the object, makes us trifle in Gods worſhip. As *Hierom* tells of *Hilarion* †, whoſe heart roving from God, was ſoundly ſcourged for his labour by an Angel. And therefore the only cure of this is, to get a *true and greater degree of ſanctifying grace.*

* As the Ivy, though ſtump, body and branches be cut off, yet ſome ſprigs will ſprout, till the wall be pulled down. So it is with us.

† *Oravit ſemel fixo in terram capite & ut natura fert hominum, abducta ab oratione mens neſcio quid aliud cogitabat: inſiliit dorſo ejus feſtinans gladiator & & latera calcibus, cervicem flagello verberans: eja inquit, cur dormitas? cachinnaſque deſuper, cum defeciſſet, an horde. n vellet accipere, ſcitabatur.* Hieron. in vita Hilar. p. 243.

You that have no grace, can never pray well, till your hearts be changed, a new heart can only ſing this new ſong well.

well. * You complain that you want *expreſſions*, ah! it is *impreſſions* you want, and nothing elſe; if you had that ſenſe of ſin, that makes the ſoul to ake and mourn, you would find words ſufficient to expreſs it, and you would not be playing with your fingers, when you are in danger of falling into hell fire; nor ſmiling at one another, when *God* is frowning, and thundring againſt you. He that feels the Stone to torment, hath few wandring thoughts, while he is telling his grief, and ſeeking help. The condemned priſoner is not ſleeping, or fooling at the Bar. *Dionyſius* his Flatterer had little mind of his Muſick, ſeeing the naked ſword hang by an hair over his empty head; neither would a poor ſinner, if he were enlightned to ſee his guilt and danger, ſo commonly and ſenſeleſſly trifle before God, when his matter is debating, and terms of life or death propoſing. Alas! there is no hope of your cure in this, till your fundamental diſeaſe be healed, your whole life is a long diſtraction from the true end, and main buſineſs of life; and therefore it ſtands you upon, if ever you would perform a pleaſing duty unto God, to get *grace whereby you may ſerve God acceptably*;

* I never knew a Beggar that wanted words to expreſs his wants. B. *Hall.*

ceptably, * for without that you cannot do it.

* *Lydia* did then attend unto the things ſpoken by the Lord, but it was when he had opened her heart. *Act.* 16. 14, 15.

And to counterballance that corruption of Nature in you, you that have ſome ſanctification, muſt get more. This ſweet wood caſt into that bitter water, will by degrees render it more wholeſome. The more ſanctification, the more you will be mortified to the world, and all the buſineſs and vanity thereof; and then its thoughts and cares will not ruſh in, with that violence upon you, but ſtay to ſpeak with you at your better leiſure; or if they be invading the heart, you will have more vigour of grace to expel them, and more repentance for them; you will be more lively, and ſpiritual, and fervent in Religious duties, and ſo leſs room for theſe wandrings; for he that's hot in his buſineſs, prevents the aſſault of the moſt importunate diverſions; and a lively ſerious Chriſtian runs on his errand, like *Eliſha*'s Servant, 2 *King.* 4. 29. *If thou meet any man, ſalute him not; and if any ſalute thee, anſwer him not again*; and Satan cannot faſten diſcourſe on ſuch a man: yea, and generally, the more holy the heart is, the fewer of theſe wandring thoughts; foraſmuch as ſanctity being his

his frame and element, heterogeneous by-thoughts do put him out of his temper, and so displease him, and cause some smart to the soul; and the sin that really molests a man, will hardly ever prevail over him; and finally, the more holiness you attain, the more afraid will you be to displease God. For to be *amended with a little cross, to be affected with a little mercy, and to be afraid of a little sin*, are certain arguments of a great deal of grace. And therefore an holy Christian is more troubled at a vain thought in a duty, than a sleight Christian is at the total neglect of a Duty.

It follows therefore, that all means be used and improved to the utmost, for the increasing of the grace of God in your hearts, there being as much duty to grow in grace, as to get it, and no greater argument of sincerity, than endeavours to grow better. Turn therefore those many thoughts you spend about the truth of your grace, into all possible care to advance and increase it, so will you best clear your doubts, and in particular clear your distractions.

SECT.

SECT. III.

§. 3. III. Unpreparedneſs.

THe *third Cauſe* of diſtractions in the Service of God, is, *unpreparedneſs unto it.* Job 11. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and ſtretch out thine hands to him —— If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away —— Then ſhalt thou be ſtedfaſt.* Firſt, prepare the heart, then ſtretch out the hands. He that keeps not his foot, when he goes into the houſe or ſervice of God, a thouſand to one he ſtumbles, and offers but the ſacrifice of fools. He that's unfitted for any work, muſt needs be unfixed in it *. As holy Mr. *Dod* uſed to ſay of Afflictions, when we are prepared for them, they are like a ſword that only ſtrikes upon our Armour; but when we be unprepared, they be like a ſword ſtriking on our bare skin: Even ſo, when the heart is well fixed and prepared for the *Lord*'s ſervice, an impertinent thought or ſuggeſtion falls on our Armour, but when we come unprepared, it meets with our very hearts, and runs away with them. If a man chop into a *Prince*'s preſence undreſs'd, unbruſh'd, or without

* Hence *David*, Pſ. 57. 7, 8. So *Deborah*, Judg. 5. 12.

without his band, you may eaſily imagine how, when he is aware of the feathers or dirt up and down, he is diſtracted; ſo is the Soul wofully carried off, when approaching to *God*, the follies of ſin, and vanities of the world diſfigure and divert it from a cloſe converſe with God; and therefore a *ſerious Chriſtian* doth not only pray, and watch in prayer, but watcheth unto prayer. We ſo eat our meat (ſayes *Tertullian* of their primitive Supping) as remembring we muſt go pray before we go to bed *. And here I ſhall anſwer a neceſſary Queſtion, *viz.*

Q. *What kind of Preparation is neceſſary before our ordinary duties of Worſhip?*

Anſw. 1. The light of nature teacheth us to prepare for every weighty action. Approaching to the Lord of Heaven and Earth is ſuch. Who teaches the Client to conſider his caſe, when he comes to ſtate it to his Advocate? or the Huſband-man to prepare himſelf for his tillage, or the poor ſuitor to weigh his requeſt, that he makes to a Prince? Why, the light of nature teacheth this; and the light of Scripture diſtinguiſheth an upright man from an hypocrite hereby. 2 *Chron.* 19. 3. *There are good things in thee —— in that thou*

* *Ita ſaturantur, ut qui meminerint etiam per noctem adorandum Deum ſibi eſſe — Ita fabulantur, ut qui ſciant Dominum audire: à conviviis diſceditur —— ut qui non tam cœnaverint quam diſciplinam.* Tertul. Apol. p. 36.

thou haſt prepared thine heart to ſeek God: there was *Jehoſaphat.* Again, 2 *Chron.* 12, 14. *Reboboam did evil, becauſe he prepared not his heart to ſeek the Lord.* He ſought God, its likely, as many will do, but he cared not how he did it, and ſo though he did a good thing, yet, ſaith the Scripture, *He did evil.*

Anſw. 2. Moſt certainly the Lord is a *great God,* who can raiſe or ruine thee in a moment, and whom the Angels approach not without a profound reſpect: and ſo likewiſe duties of Worſhip are great and weighty Duties, wherein you tranſact for a Kingdom, and plead or hear the cauſe that is for life or death. You drink a cup that will either mend or end you, and who is ſufficient for theſe things? And it is manifeſt, that we are naturally unprepared, and to every good work reprobate. The poſiture of our hearts is inverted, and now they are open downwards, and ſhut towards Heaven; all which if you lay together, it muſt needs follow, that ſome preparation is neceſſary, even for the ordinary duties of God's Worſhip.

Anſw. 3. The hearts of men are of a different temper, and ſo are their occaſions;

sions; the hearts of some are alwayes in heaven, or else within a Call: they are, as the *Apostle* speaks, *Tit.* 3. 1. *Ready to every good work.* When a duty of Piety is offered, they are ready; when an object of charity is proposed, they are *ready to distribute.* And this present Spirit is a great blessing, when Holiness is so rooted and framed upon the heart, that God's Worship is their Element: the hearts of others, through custome and supine negligence, abide at great distance from God; no little ado will raise them, nor will they be fetch'd in with many calls; like a great Bell, hard to be raised: and as these have a greater unhappiness, so they have need of more pains to fit them for God's service *.

* In such case Meditation, like a dish of water, may set the Pump a going; yea, foul water may bring up fair water. B. *Hall.*

The occasions of some men will give them time enough to set their hearts in order, to state their souls condition, and chafe themselves into an holy heat; and for them to come with cold and dead hearts into Religious duties, cannot be answered. The occasions of others are so urgent and continual, that they have much ado to redeem time for Prayer, but can hardly set apart time for a set and formal Preparation; especially when a man

man is surprised with an holy duty, or in prayer at meals, or the like: and therefore one Last may as soon fit all feet, as one particular Rule suit with every good Christian.

Answ. 4. The least measure of Preparation that is necessary for the ordinary worship of God, is, *That the heart be recalled, and recollected out of the world*, and made apprehensive or sensible of the Nature of that God, and weight of that work, that you are about*; which, if you can attain in a minute, or are of necessity straitned or surprized, you will be welcome to Heaven: but if you can easily order your time, or not easily order your hearts, and remand your thoughts, you venture on your peril; and if God be not merciful, and you penitent, you will carry away a curse instead of a blessing. And so I conclude this Answer with *Heb.*12.28,29. *Let us have grace* (not only a gracious habit, but a gracious frame) *whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire*†.

Think it not much therefore, to keep or get an heart prepared for the Worship of God. When *Ringers* set not in together, there's little but jangling in that Peal,

* *Pro.*18.1. If thou canst not alwayes have separating time betwixt other occasions and Gods worship, yet have some separating thoughts ere thou enter upon the duty. M. *Angier*, *p.* 197.

† *Illotis manibus precari nihil refert: illotâ conscientiâ, hoc maximum malorum.* Chrysost. Serm. de Joseph.

Peal, but when they start all together, there's sweet musick; and so it is, when all the Congregation set out, and take wing at once, it's musick for Heaven: whereas the heart that is unready for the duty, mostly rings discords in it, and spoils the harmony *. And indeed, this unpreparedness of the soul doth make the duty ungrateful to the Worshipper; When a friend comes upon you, and you are unready, no provision or rooms in readiness, how (comparatively) unpleasing is his visit, and distracted his entertainment? when as to him that keeps a constant table, or hath made set preparation, the sight and conversation of his friend is very sweet: So it is between our God and us; when the rooms of the soul are prepared, and *at our gates* (ready) *are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, laid up for our beloved*, how can we welcome our Maker on his own cost into our souls? whereas Christ himself hath but cold welcome, and distracted entertainment in an unprepared soul. Lift up therefore thy heart in the porch of a duty, with Psal. 119. 37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way.*

* When you have prepared your hearts, God will pass by great imperfections, 2 *Chr.* 30. 18, 19. and you may then do much in a little time, *Psal.* 10. 17. Thou hast prepared their hearts, then thou wilt cause thine ears to hear. Mr. *Burroughs.*

SECT. IV.

§. 4. Luke-warmneſs.

THE *fourth cauſe* of Diſtractions in God's Worſhip is *Luke-warmneſs* *. He that is intenſe in any thing hath few thoughts to ſpare. Diſtractions are but the idlings of the heart, he that runs, looks at nothing but the goal; though he meet paſſengers, or paſs by Palaces, he is in earneſt, and ſtops at nothing: it is he that walks at leiſure, that turns his eye to every trifle, and deſcants on every object, he's not in haſte at all. Even ſo the zealous Soul, though he forgets not thoſe things that are behind, yet reaching forth to the things that are before, preſſeth towards the mark, he hath buſineſs in hand that concerns Eternity, he cannot ſtand to whiſper with every paſſenger, nor trifle with every object. It is the luke-warm heart that is prone to that. He can pray to God, and dreſs himſelf at once, he can hear God and talk with men,

* This night paſt as I awakened out of my ſleep, the Devil came and intimated, that God was far from me, and heard not my dull prayers: So I ſaid, Well then, ſo will I cry the louder. *Luth. Colloq.* And when he found his ſpirit out of frame, he would never give over praying, till he had prayed his heart into that frame he prayed for.

men, speak about heaven and contrive about the earth, and, in a word, serve God and Mammon at a time. Good *Jacob* was little troubled with wandring thoughts, *Hos.* 12. 3,4. when he had *by his strength power with God, yea, he had power over the Angel and prevailed, for he wept and made supplication.* Tears are the best charms to chase away Distractions. While you sweat, and weep, and pray, wandring thoughts will flee away *.

As there can be no reason given for any sin, (call'd therefore folly) so for this in special; for if the holy work you are about, be worth the consuming of your time, (which passes in every duty, and is most peecious) sure it's worth the spending your pains and diligence. He that loseth his time in the duty, and loseth his soul by his luke-warmness in the duty, makes a mad-mans match. For if the Sermon, Prayer, Chapter, be not worth thy labour, never attempt it; and if it be, never shrink, nor be indifferent about it. When you see a man freez at his work, it invites a passenger to entertain him with talk. And a frigid attender upon God tempts the Devil himself to tempt him. Wherefore the Apostle, *Rom.* 12. 11.

* Birds will not light nor stay on flaming Sacrifices. Mr. *White.*

Where could a wandring thought get into that moſt zealous Prayer, *Dan. 9. 19.*

directs us to be *fervent in ſpirit*, while we *are ſerving the Lord:* not drowſie, but fervent in ſpirit, or *boyling hot*, as the word ſignifies. The buſieſt flies will not meddle with the ſcalding honey; though the ſweetneſs entice them, yet the heat affrights them. The baſe flies of thy diſtractions will not moleſt thy heart, if it keep boyling hot in the ſervice of God. A warm and weeping Prayer is the right Holy Water, that ſcares away the devil.

Now the beſt remedy againſt this Luke-warmneſs is, 1. Conſideration, and 2. Practice.

1. Conſideration of the ineffectualneſs of a frozen duty, which ſeldom reacheth the Heart of God when it reacheth not our own *. That *the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent* only *take it by force*; that ſuch duties neither pleaſe God, nor our ſelves, they mock God, and rather deceive than delight us. That ſome Prayer or Sermon muſt be thy laſt, and perhaps this preſent may be it. That it is an irrational thing, to bring a dead Sacrifice to a living God. That one ſerious and lively duty does you more good and leaves a more ſweet, bleſſed and active frame upon the ſoul, than an hundre-

* *Tu non audis orationem tuam, & Dominum vis audire precem tuam?* Chryſ. de Nat. Dom. Hom. 17.

dred heartless services; and, in short, That the Majesty, whom you serve, loves *Adverbs* *, and narrowly observes the How's and Why's of Sacred Worship: That *it is not a vain thing that you are about, for it is your life.* Deut. 32. 47.

2. Practice is the other remedy. To cure this luke-warmness in God's service, frequent those Lights that are burning as well as shining. Let's go to *Dedham* (said the *Godly* in that time) to fetch fire, when famous *Mr. Rogers* was there. If you cannot hear a warming Divine, then read them, and be sure to have some Books for the rouzing and heating of your heart, as others for clearing and instructing your judgement, unless the work of Sanctification be perfect already in your heart and affections, while it remains imperfect in your mind and judgement. Associate also with zealous Christians, borrow some of their heat, and lend them some of your light; and be not ashamed to talk of God, Heaven and a Soul when you are together; you lose the benefit of mens graces, for want of broaching those blessed Vessels of grace you converse with. Especially read the Scripture, which will inflame thee, and

* *Nihil enim, nihil iaquam, precatione ignitâ & sincerâ validius est.* Chrys. ad Phil.

mold thee (being rightly uſed) into it bleſſed nature. I have known ſome, tha before their private duties would medi tate on a * verſe in the *Pſalms*, *Canticles* or the like, and then run hot and livel into the preſence of God. And chooſ rather to be † frequent and fervent, tha long and roving in a duty. Shorter prayer may ſometimes inflame, when long one tire the ſpirits; and that way the antien Chriſtians * in *Ægypt* uſed to take. And laſtly, do as holy *David* did, that carryed ſuch a nature as thou doſt, be ever calling to God, (as He who is at it eight or nin times in *Pſal.* 119. *Quicken me in thy way quicken me, and I will call upon thy name* and if He had need thus to fetch fire from Heaven, how much more have We?

* *Orationi lectio, lectioni ſuccedat oratio.* Hieron. ad Læt.

† *Nam ſi ſermonem in longum extenderis, in negligentiam frequenter lapſus, multa Diabolo ſubrependi facultatem dederis & ſupplantandi, abducendi cogitationem ab his qui dicuntur.* Chryſ. Hom. 79. ad pop Antioch.

* *Dicuntur fratres in Ægypto crebras quidem habere orationes, ſed eas tam brevissimas & raptim quodammodo jaculatas* ——— *Ne per productiones mora evaneſcat atque hebetetur intentio. Abſit enim ab oratione multa locutio ſed non deſit multa precatio.* Auguſt. Epiſt. 121.

2. Were it not better to omit the du ty, than attempt it with ſuch a dull heart leſs frame as this?

A. 1. Omiſſion of a duty will never fi us for the better performance of a duty *Luther*

Luther was used to say, The ofner I neglect, the more unfit I am: this is nothing but a shift of the Devil.

2. If thou dost endeavour with thy utmost strength and sincerity, though thou be dull, it's better than to leave it undone: for as one sin prepares for another, so one duty prepares for another. Fall therefore to work, and then God is engaged to help thee; never think neglects will mend it; one sin never cures another.

Oratio debet esse avari, quando devotio potest conservari. Aquin. 22. 983. a. 14.

By the upright use of these means, you will find the holy Ghost, as it were, stretch himself on your cold hearts, and infuse life and heat into you. And when you are soaring aloft *in the Spirit*, that cunning marksman cannot shoot, and fetch you down by his distracting Arrows.

SECT. V.

§. 5. V. Worldly-mindedneſs.

THe *fifth cauſe* of Diſtractions in God's Worſhip, is, *Worldly mindedneſs*. An heart in earth, and an heart in Heaven, are far aſunder *. As long as the *Lark* ſoareth upward, ſhe ſings without danger of the Net; but ſtooping to gaze on the Foulers deceitful Glaſs, ſhe is quickly enſnared. So is it with us, while we live aloft, we are ſafe; but when the heart ſtoops down, and grows worldly through the falſe glaſs Satan puts upon it, then are we taken in theſe ſnares. Ezek. 33. 31. *With their mouths they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetouſneſs.* Their faces look one way, but they row another; their eyes are up towards heaven, their hearts ſet on the earth, and graſping two affairs they proſper in neither. How ſhould he ſet his affections on the things above, that hath ſet them chiefly on things below? when as theſe two are directly oppoſed, *Col.* 3. 2. How ſhould the Soul, that Bird of Paradiſe, flie up to heaven in a duty, when it is not only weighed down with the lead

* Adhærere Domino indivulſe *& non ſubinde mundanis curis interpelli & negotiis abſtrahi ut vix dum finitâ ſpirituali illâ actione in quâ jam verſatus eſt, ſtatim ad terrena anxiè curanda tranſvolet & carnalibus rebus ita ſe penitus immiſceat ac ſi Infidelis eſſet.* Mort. in Cor. 7. 35.

lead of natural corruption, but intangled in the lime-twigs of earthly-mindedneſs? they can never write on their duties, *Holineſs to the Lord*, that ſtamp upon their coyn, *God with us* *. Hence it comes to paſs, that the heart is loth to come to an Ordinance, and then longs to go out again: how heavily do they go to Church, how lightly to the market? for here the heart goes with them, and there it's left behind; and being forc'd into a duty, becauſe its treaſure is in the world, the heart haſtens to be there again, and *ſicut piſcis in arido*, is out of its element when in an Ordinance *.

* M. *Willes* of perilous times.

We read of the *world ſet in a mans heart*, Eccleſ. 3. 11. and of an *heart ſet on the world*, Pſal. 62. 10. Now how ſhould God have any of ſuch a heart? No, no, he that is of the earth is earthly, and ſpeaketh of the earth; there he can reſt without wearineſs; of that he can diſcourſe without diſtractions: but when he ſhould turn to God, and flee to heaven, this care knocks at door, and that buſineſs whiſpers him in the ear, and there the carcaſe is left, but the heart is gone. The Prophet, *Hoſea* 4. 11. tells us, that *whoredome, and wine, and new wine take away the heart.* It were

* See a plain inſtance hereof in that hearer, *Luke* 11. 13, 14.

were very unlikely, that any man in the heat of those sins should pray, or hear, or meditate aright; and it is much what as likely, for an heart that is taken away with the cares of this world, and drowned therein, to converse with God, without innumerable wandrings *.

* *Curvasti quidem genua, sed mens tua foris vagabatur: os quidem loquebatur, sed mens usuras cogitabat, possessionem, reditus supputabat.* Chrysost. Hom. 17. de Nat. Dom.

Mistake not, it is not the *world*, but *worldly mindedness* that is taxed; not the increase of riches, but the *heart* set upon them *: And so no doubt a poor man may have his part of distractions, through his want of worldly things, as well as the rich through his abundance. He may have many a distracting thought what to do *for the world*, as the rich hath what to do *with the world*. And thus we see, those things which were given for our welfare, prove our snare; and what should hire us to serve God, keeps us from him. Which shews what good reason the wise man had to crave neither riches nor poverty, but convenient comforts, seeing the *weight* of the world distracts one sort, and the *want* of the world another sort in the very immediate service of God. Howbeit for

* Water under a ship helps it, but water in the ship drowns it.

for the moſt part, the heart that is fulleſt of the world is emptieſt of God.

Now the beſt remedy againſt worldly mindedneſs, is *Mortification*. O get a chip of Chriſt's Croſs, *Gal.* 6. 14. whereby the *world will be crucifi'd to you, and you to the world*. So was *Paul*. As ſaith one of the *Antients* *, *Paul* and the world were like two dead bodies, that neither embrace with delight, nor part with grief from each other. You muſt be dead, *I ſay dead*, to the world, if you mean to live to God, or live with him. A drunken prayer, and a worldly prayer, are alike devout. Therefore * *Love not the world, nor the things of the world*, for ſo long the love of the Father is not in you; and if you love him not, how ſhould you pray to him? It would be an ill favoured ſight, to behold all this Congregation in their work-day cloaths here; how unpleaſing a ſight to God is it, to ſee us all with our work-day hearts? Now that you may be rid of an earthly heart, faithfully make uſe of theſe directions.

* *Chryſoſt.*

* Let not the world be your familiar friend, familiar friends will come in without knocking. Mr. *White of Thoughts.*

1. Get faith, to believe the report God hath given of the world, that all that is in it, is but the luſts of the fleſh, the luſts of the eyes, and the pride of life; a poor

poor vain thing, not able to give the ſoul a breakfaſt *: this all that have taſted it, and Chriſt alſo, do averr, and canſt thou find that in it, which none ever found? will it do more for thee, than ever it did for any? Believe its vanity upon God's Word, ere thou try it by thy ſad experience.

* When we ſhall have reigned hereafter many millions of years in Heaven, what thoughts will remain of this little inch of time upon earth, &c. M. *Bolton*, Diſcourſe of true Happineſs. pag. 143.

Get faith to ſuck vertue out of Chriſt's death to vanquiſh it. *For this is our victory*, 1 Joh. 5. 4. *that overcometh the world, even our faith.* Lay thee down with Chriſt in the grave by faith, and ſay then, What is the world? Get faith to believe that eternal happineſs, which being once ſeen by that piercing eye, would ſo diſgrace the world, that all the comforts of it would not weigh a ſtraw in compariſon of it *. If a man lived in the *Sun*, what a poor mote would the whole earth look? He that lives in Chriſt in Heaven, by faith ſees all the glories of the earth with a diſdainful eye, and cries, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*

* Let their money periſh with them, that eſteem all the Gold in the world worth one dayes ſociety with Jeſus Chriſt. *Galeacius* to a *Nobleman*, tempting him to Apoſtatize with a great ſumm of money.

2. You ſhall be helped againſt this diſeaſe, by deep conſideration of the folly and

and miſery of ſuch a frame of heart. It's folly, for all that is gotten of the world, with the neglect of the ſoul, invaſion of holy duties, or by a carking worldly heart, comes to thee in wrath, will ſink thee deeper in hell; or if thou repent, is (moſt commonly) ſome way conſumed, *& vix gaudet tertius hæres*, thy grand-child will rue it. If we could penetrate the method of God's providence, uſually thoſe loſſes you have in this beaſt, or the other houſe, or the like, are the juſt value of what you have gotten by immoderate care, hard dealing with others, or unſeaſonable contrivance, when your heart ſhould have been better employed. And then the miſery of worldly-mindedneſs, that it *pierceth the heart through with many ſorrows*. Sorrow and pain in getting, ſorrow and care in keeping, ſorrow and grief in loſing. The heart is never at perfect reſt. A man would not uſe his horſe, as a worldling doth his heart, gives it no quiet or eaſe, and all this to no purpoſe at all. Hab. 2.23. *The people labour in the very fire, and weary themſelves for very vanity.* And may not the conſideration hereof be an effectual means to hate this humour? and when it is once hated, it is more than half diſcharged.

3. Have

3. Have recourſe to God by prayer, and therein ſee and bewail thy former madneſs; ſolemnly vow to reſtore their right to every man thou haſt wronged; rather part, like *Zacheus*, with half thine eſtate, than with thy whole ſoul and body; and earneſtly cry to the Lord, *to encline thy heart to his teſtimonies, and not unto covetouſneſs*, Pſal. 119. 36. Intreat your heavenly Father, to give you an heavenly heart, and if it come not at firſt aſking, it's a gift worth going for again; humbly tell him, by vertue of that Covenant wherein you promiſed to forſake the world, (which you are now reſolved to ſtick to) his Majeſty is bound to give you a mortifi'd and heavenly heart, and you will never leave him, till you have obtained it.

* *Cogitatio omnis ſecularis & carnalis abſcedat, nec quicquam tunc animus quam illud ſolum cogitat quod poſcatur.* Cypr. de Orat. Domin.

4. * Charm your hearts from worldly thoughts, when you go to the worſhip of God. Prov. 16. 1, 3. *The preparation of the heart is from the Lord — Commit thy wayes to him, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* The Heathen left their ſhooes at the Temple doors, to intimate, that all earthly affections muſt be left behind you, when you go to ſpeak with God. Do as that great *States-man* uſed, who would lay

lay off his Gown, wherein he administred his Office, when he went to worship God, and say, *Lie there, Lord Cecil*; implying, he would take none of the cares of his Office into the presence of God: So when you go to prayer, reading or hearing, lay aside the world, and say, Lie there house, ye fields lie there; lie there my cares, till I have done with God. So *Abraham left his servants and asses*, Gen. 22. 5. *below the hill*, and took up nothing but an holy heart, and the materials of his Sacrifice with him thither. Keep still an eye upon your hearts, and both *watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation* *.

* *Exemplum legimus de quodam qui volens Rusticum convincere de cordis instabilitate dum sit Oratio, politicus est se daturum sibi Asinum si posset Orationem Dominicam, nihil aliud actualiter cogitans, perficere. Qui mox ut ad orationem divertit, futurus de Asini lucro, cœpit distrahi in hanc cogitationem, si Sellam habiturus erat cum Asino: qui tandem ad se reditus & se redarguens instabilitatem sui cordis confessus est.* Gerson de Orat. p. 611.

SECT. VI.

§. 6.

THe *sixth cause* of Distractions in the Worship of God is, *Weakness of love to Jesus Christ*, and consequently *to his Ordinances*. Love unites the soul to its

VI. Weakness of love to Christ and his Ordinances.

its object: as Faith is the bond of our *mystical*, so Love is the bond of our *moral* union with Christ. The more love to Christ, the more life in his service. *Cant.* 8. 6. *Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm: for love is strong as death.* Were your love more strong, it would seal up both soul and body, and unite them firmly unto Jesus Christ. Love marries the heart and eye to the object; hence 'tis, there is not a distracting thought in heaven, for there love is perfect: they see, and love, and sing; and praise, and see, enjoy, and love, for ever and ever. The three Disciples, *Matth.* 17. 4. had but an half-quarter glimpse of that state, but their love to their dearest Lord and his presence was so heightened, that the world was forgotten, *Jerusalem* below, and all their friends and fellow-Disciples forgotten, and they undone to abide there. And if we could by the eye of faith see him that is invisible, and perfectly love him, O how hardly could we spare a by-thought in his presence and service! no, all the world would be forgotten, comforts and crosses all sleep together, while God and our soul were conversing in an Ordinance*.

* *Dat mihi fræna Timor, dat mihi calcar Amor.*

Whence

Whence is it that most men can work and care perpetually, and no distractions divert them? discourse their business most orderly, without one alien thought? drive on a bargain an hour together, and think on nothing but what's pertinent to their present business? Why, they love what they are about, they like it well, and so tongue and heart go together, are wholely taken up therewith. The jovial knot like their company, and nothing shall distract them; the servant comes about necessary business: the master fumes that they will not let him alone; the child comes, and then the wife, but he frets, he rages. And why all this? why, he loves his company, 'tis his delight, his heaven: Even so, the Soul that hath a strong love to a precious Christ, and his Ordinance-presence, doth most heavily bear a distracting thought. The devil cannot pluck him from *Christ*, but the soul smarts, and when there is this smart at parting, that soul will part but seldom. You have sometimes seen a sucking child, that loves the mother and the breast most dearly; how loth is it to leave it, while it is hungry? how eagerly and angrily it seeks, and cries, and catches

hold again? Here's love*. *Christ Jesus* is the spring of all happiness, and his Ordinances are his breasts, and he that loves the Lord Jesus with all his soul, and all his strength; there he lies, and sucks at the breasts of consolation. This business knocks at door, that trifle tempts him; yet there he sticks and frowns away all his temptations. His love is ardent, *Psal.* 1. 2. *His delight is in the Law of the Lord*, and then it follows, *in that Law doth he meditate day and night.* When prayer is your delight, and not your task, then you will dwell therein with complacence, Psal. 43. 4. *Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.* Children are subject to look off their books, because they delight not in them, but when they are playing, they do, *hoc agere.* But now when thy love is cool, and weak, thou lovest Christ, and that's all; alas, there's little heart to him, the soul comes heavily to him, and having little delight, and heavenly complacence in him, is most easily drawn off with any distraction; for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also; where God and Christ are a mans treasure, his heart is with them. He wakes, and travels, and cares, but his heart

* *Omnes igitur cordis à stractiones & meatûs fluctuationes in unum collige, in solo Deo totum desiderium tuum fige, & b' sit cor tuum ubi est thesaurus tuus desid. rabilis multumque amabilis.* Bern. de inter. Domo. c. 5.

heart is with them; he runs through his buſineſs with all the haſte, that may ſtand with good ſpeed, that he may retreat to his heart, which he left with God, and then holy duties are the reſt of his ſoul. And where the world, or ſin, are a mans treaſure, his heart is with them alſo; he reads, and hears, and prays, but his heart is away: the leaſt noiſe, buſineſs or whiſper can fetch him away, alas, his love is cool, and a drop of water will quench a ſpark of fire *.

* Judge of the Divinity of the Jeſuites. Q. When is a man obliged to have actually an affection for God? *Anſw.* Any time before he die; *others*, at the point of death; *others*, at leaſt every year: in fine, it's ſufficient if we hate him not. *Sirmond of virtue. p.* 16, 19, 24.

The Remedies of this weakneſs of love to Chriſt and his Ordinances, are,

1. Know him better, and meditate more on his real excellencies. *Ignoti nulla cupido.* Cant. 5. 9. *What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?* Why, *ver.* 16. *His mouth is moſt ſweet, yea, he is altogether lovely*; or, as the Heb. * *all of him is delights.* And then mark the reply, *chap.* 6. 1. *We will ſeek him with thee.* The pure and orient Sun is no more than a glow-worm to the blind, nor the faireſt face than a Skeleton. It is the eye that muſt

* וכלו מחמדים

affect the heart. Come then, open the eye of Faith, and gaze on this heavenly object: sit down, and meditate who, and what he is; open but the sacred Cabinet of his Attributes, every box full of most sweet perfumes: each of his offices pregnant with true and transcendent comfort. His actions, his passion, his words, his works, and above all, his heart, as full of Heaven as ever it can hold, and full *for thee:* the breast full running into the open mouth of faith, the *Fountain opened for thy sins and uncleanness.* The treasures of his grace free for thy supplies, what heart can freez under such discoveries? Nay stay, and look at him on the cross calling thee, arms stretched out to embrace thee, heart opened to let thee in, and deny him thy love if thou can. And if once * your hearts be inflamed with his love, no small businesses shall keep you from his presence, nor distract you in it.

* He loves thee little, O Lord, who loves any thing with thee, which he loves not for thee. *Nil præter te, nisi propter te.* Aug.

2. Get communion with Christ in his Ordinances. As he said on another occasion, Joh. 4. 10. *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is—— thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee living water.* So I say, if thou knewest what communion is with Christ, thou wouldest ask

ask after prayer, and long for such opportunities. Why, what is communion with Christ? Why, for thy spirit to flie up into heaven, among the Cœlestial spirits, and for Christ's Spirit to descend into thy heart. And this makes an heaven upon earth, 'tis inexperience in this, that makes us cool to Christ and holy duties: strangeness makes company burthensome. A King and a beggar, a scholar and a clown, cannot make company of one another. So when there is a distance between God and the soul, there is little longing for his Ordinance, nor true delight in it. Communion with Christ increases love, and love to him promotes communion. Cant. 8. 1. *O that thou wert my brother*, (saith the spouse) *the son of my mother*, (there's ardent love) *when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee*, (there's communion) *yet should I not be despised.* If you did but see his power and glory *, *your soul would be filled as with marrow and fatness*, and *your mouth would praise him with joyful lips*, Psal. 63. 2, 5. One beam of his holiness, love or mercy, would so charm your hearts, that you would be loth to part, and long to meet again; for how can it choose but transport a finite

* *Mount. de Resty* said of himself, that when ever he pronounc'd the name of God, he tasted such a sweetness upon his lips, as could not be expressed. *In vit. ej.*

heart, to see and feel the sweetest properties of the infinite God displayed before, and graven on it? When *Moses* was in near communion with God on the Mount, no thinking of meat, no cares about his tents below, but there he is swallowed up, and is content to melt in that Sun of light and heat, and come down no more; easie to count his distractions in the Mount. O who can see the face of God, and not be ravished therewith! who can behold the beauty of the *Lord*, and not chuse to dwell in his presence all the dayes of a mans life? 'Tis communion with *Christ Jesus*, that will warm your love to him, and when *the King brings you into his chambers, you will be glad and rejoyce in him, you will remember his love more than wine.*

3. Believe verily that you can be no where better, no where so well as in an Ordinance: this will content and please your minds in the Lord's service, when you can be no where better; for what company can be better than *God*'s? The chiefest Good must needs afford the choicest company, who can impart such rare delights and sweet content as he can? and where doth he communicate himself, as in an Ordinance? Say, the world knocks at

at door, and would have thee away; can vanity entertain you like felicity? can the world produce higher pleaſures, than he that made it? Would ſin come in, and ſteal your hearts away? can the *chiefeſt evil* create thee ſweeter entertainment than the *chiefeſt Good?* No, no, you are beſt where you are. If the world could find you ſuch another *Deity*, ſomewhat might be yielded; or give you ſecurity, like *God*, of the reality, ſatisfaction and duration of its toyes, and quarter-contents: but alas, there's no ſhew for this, you are beſt where you are. I am converſing with the *Lord of heaven and earth*, who can reward or ruine me in a moment. I am ſucking at the breaſt of the chiefeſt Good. I am in the next employment to heaven, in a corner of heaven, I cannot look off yonder lovely One, I will not leave, I muſt not come down. And this experience would enamour you of an Ordinance, and deliver you from diverſions in it; *you will ſit down under his ſhadow with great delight, when his fruit is ſweet to your taſte.*

SECT. VII.

§. 7. VII. Want of Watchfulness.

THe *seventh cause* of wandring of the thoughts in the worship of God, is, *want of watchfulness*. Matth. 26. 41. *Watch and pray* *, are most necessary companions, else *shall we fall into temptation*. In those sad times of plague, the faithful Guard stands at the City gates, and the dangerous passenger for all his importunity is stopp'd and turn'd again: Why? perhaps the plague comes with him, and therefore the Halbard salutes his breast, he comes not there; the neglect of this care would soon lay waste the land. So if any straggling thought, perhaps with the plague in it, shall enter at pleasure into the soul, especially while the Lord's service is in hand, no wonder that soul lies waste, *Lord have mercy* may be written on that door.

* *Qui enim sic vigilans orat, illius exauditur oratio; hoc enim significat dicens,* Vigilate & Orate *ut primum vigilamus & sic vigilantes oremus.* Origen. *Tract.* 35. *in Matth.*

1. The neglect of watchfulness *before holy duties* causes distractions; and that is, by not heeding to order your affairs with discretion for God's service *. When you

* *Prov.* 18. 1. Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

involve

involve your ſelves in too much buſineſs, too much for your head, too much for your time, or too much for your ſtrength, then worldly thoughts will get place, you cannot help it. Or, when men are unadviſed in their buſineſs, in not chuſing a fit time for duties, and thereby your buſineſs and God's ſhoulder one another, and neither is done well. And therefore we are commanded, 1 Pet. 4. 7. *to watch unto prayer.* As Satan watches to croſs and indiſpoſe us, by throwing ſome diverting and cooling occaſions, ſo is it our wiſdom to counter-watch him. * Indeavour to time your buſineſſes, and eſpecially your duties. It is the character of a good man, Pſal. 112. 6. that *he orders his affairs with diſcretion*, and renders every thing beautiful in its time. For it is a true obſervation, that an indiſcreet ordering of *Saturdays* buſineſs, hath great influence into the unprofitableneſs of the *Sabbath*'s Ordinances.

2. Neglect of watchfulneſs *in holy duties*. Our hearts, ſo far as unregenerate, are fetch'd into holy duties, as a preſt ſouldier into the field: he is brought in againſt his will, no principle of courage, or love to his country: he had rather be digging

* *Clariſſima ſunt, audi quæ dico: Ante tempus orare eſt providentia; In tempore conſtituto orare, eſt obedientia; Tempus orandi præterire, eſt negligentia.* Bern. de modo benè vivendi. Serm. 49.

digging or idling at home. Now ſuch a ſouldier, what truſt can you repoſe in him, if he be not watch'd? he ſteals away at every lanes end, and in the midſt of the battel, you ſhall be ſure to miſs him; a conſtant eye muſt keep him, or you loſe him. 'Tis juſt ſo with our naughty hearts, if there be not a predominant principle of grace, 'tis not *choice* but *uſe* that brings them in, they would rather be carking or trifling about any thing, than buſie in prayer, and therefore if you neglect to watch them at every turn, no ſentence end but they will ſteal away. For * prayer without watching is but a meer complement. Where the tongue goes one way, and the heart another, that's a complement, and ſuch is a watchleſs duty. It is ſaid, the *Nightingale* in her ſweeteſt notes is apt to fall aſleep; to prevent which, ſhe ſettles her ſelf on a bough, with a thorn at her breaſt, that when ſhe begins to nod, that ſharp monitor may awake her. The holieſt † Saint is apt to nod, and ſteal away in the midſt of his ſolemneſt duties; if God's Spirit do not *aurem vellere*, quicken his watch. Chriſt's own Diſciples, even *juſt after a Sacrament*, were overtaken for want of this, *Matth.* 26.40.

* *Inefficax petitio eſt, cum precatur Deum ſterilis oratio. Quia Deus non vocis ſed cordis eſt auditor.* Cyprian. de Orat. Dom.

† *Bonum eſt ſanctorum precibus frui, ſed quando & ipſi ſeduli & vigiles ſuerint.* Chryſ. in 1 Theſſ.

26. 40. *What, could ye not watch with me one hour?* And if they fell asleep at prayer for want of watching, how can you keep close to God without it, that have neither so good a monitor without, nor so good an heart within?

3. Neglect of watchfulness *after duties* causes distractions in the next that follow; people use to let loose their hearts, when the Duty ends, and unlace themselves for ease; and then their thoughts take liberty *. Which our deceitful hearts fore-seeing, no cords will bind them to a good behaviour in the very duties themselves; whereas, were there a constant watch kept up after our duties were done, and conscience made of our thoughts all the day long, we should contain our hearts in better order, while Gods worship lasts. The fore-sight, and especially fore-tastes of liberty approaching, sets the soul madding thereupon, and we cannot keep it in. Besides, Religion is concatenated, hath a dependance one thing upon another, and it is unsufferable to take and leave where we will. If vain thoughts lodge with you at *other times*, they will visit you at your *business*, and if they be entertained when *you have a mind*,

* As men are out of prayer, so will they be in prayer. *Morn. Lect.*

mind, they will preſs in when *you have no mind.*

The *Remedy* againſt this neglect is, To be *throughly convicn'd of the abſolute neceſſity of conſtant watchfulneſs*, Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, as a caſtle is kept from ſcaling, an houſe from robbing, or a Jewel from defacing, ſo the *Criticks*; and all theſe are kept conſtantly, one hours negligence would hazard any of them* —— And then *with all diligence*, Heb. *with all keeping*, or as ſome, *above all keeping*. The eye we watch from harm all the day, the vitals we defend and guard with conſtant care; we know that a touch there is mortal; but above all keeping keep the ſoul: Be perſwaded, that watchfulneſs is as neceſſary as prayer; you think, without prayer you ſhall go to hell, and I averr that without watchfulneſs you cannot go to heaven. Mans life in this ſenſe is a continued Ordinance. *Hoſ.* 12. 6. *wait on thy God continually*; not only at thy prayers, but at thy plough; while on your knees you are waiting on God, and when you riſe from your knees, you are going to wait on him in your calling, and an unbecoming thought is diſpleaſing to him every where; he is ſenſible

* Let us imagine a City not only begirt with a ſtrait ſiege of blood-thirſty enemies, but alſo within infeſted with lurking Commotioners, how much would it ſtand that City upon to ſtand upon its guard, &c. M. *Bolton's* diſcourſe of true Happineſs, p. 146.

ble of an affront in the kitchen as well as in the parlour, and hates vanity all the day long. 1 Pet. 4. 7. *Be sober, and watch unto prayer.* Sober and watch, as if they that do not watch are mad. To *watch unto prayer* in duty, as well as to watch *in it*. He that watches not to duties, doth not do his duty: a wise Christian should have alwayes something in store for God; work and look at God, eat, and drink, and talk, and still look at God, and at the soul*. This is to walk with God all the day long. As the careful *Bee* must needs leave her hive, and fly abroad, but she *dwells* no where else, she lights on this flower, and then on that, exhausts their sweetness, deflowers them, and gets away; she never rests till she return to her hive, there she rests and enjoys her self. So an holy heart must needs out into the world, and business must be done, but he rests at nothing, till he return to the enjoyment of God again, no flower gives him content, no business, no company satisfies, but he retires to God, looks at him, and is lightned, and steps out again. This, Sirs, this is the Religion of Religion. † I know it's hard, but it's possible, the ice is broken for you, and the way is trodden.

* You see the Angels sent about God's messages to this earth, yet never out of their heaven, never without the vision of their Maker; & so should you strive when you are up and down in your business, yet be within sight of God. D. *Hall's* Contempt.

† It's a thousand times easier to keep the flood-gates shut, than to drain the lower grounds when they are overflown. *Idem.*

Act.

Act. 24. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have alwayes a conſcience void of offence.* It's my daily trade and buſineſs to keep my ſoul, that I neither offend God nor man. If you will make a trade on't, you may do it. God never calls for duty, but helps in it. Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things through Chriſt.* God and his ſervant can do any thing.

SECT. VIII.

§. 8. VIII. A beloved ſin.

THe *eighth cauſe* of diſtractions in holy duties is *, *A beloved ſin.* When the ſoul hath eſpouſed ſome boſome luſt, the thoughts (be you never ſo buſie) will be warping towards it, though God himſelf look on. Jer. 4. 14. *O Jeruſalem, waſh thy heart from wickedneſs, ——— how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* When wickedneſs is in the heart, vain thoughts will be in thy duties; they will enter, yea, they will lodge within thee. A beloved ſin is like a byaſs on the bowl, though you throw it out never ſo ſtreight, yet the byaſs will draw it off that way, do what you can: ſo is a beloved ſin unto the ſoul; aim you with utmoſt ſkill, yet there

* Obſerve, that *ſome* make a difference between a beloved ſin, and a reigning ſin; a beloved ſin rules over our ſins, not over our graces; a reigning ſin rules over both.

there is a ſecret load-ſtone in it, that attracts the heart, and makes that prayer to end in hell, that began in heaven. Either ſin and you muſt be at a diſtance, or God and you will. The ſoul that is in league with ſin, dare not come at God, dare not look at him, dare not think on him; and what muſt that man think on in a duty, that dare not think ſeriouſly on God? As that *penitent Father* ſpeaks in his *confeſſions*. An unmortifi'd ſoul (like the huſband of a ſcolding wife, had rather be any where than at home, and makes many a ſad bargain abroad, becauſe he hath no comfort at home with his wife; ſo ſuch an heart) chooſes to be thinking of any thing rather than God *; alas, matters are not ſtraight between them, the poiſon of ſin is in him, and he huggs that *abominable thing which God hates*; the Thief had rather go forty miles another way, than come near the Judge; God is an offended Judge to a wilful ſinner, and he cares not for ever coming near him. Hence, Heb. 12. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full aſſurance of faith, having our hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience.* He that comes to God with a true upright honeſt heart, being ſprinkled from an evil conſcience,

* *Gravi namque mens noſtra orationis ſuæ tempore confuſione deprimitur, ſi hanc aut ſua adhuc operatio inquinat, aut alicujus malitiæ ſervatus dolor accuſat.* Greg. in Job, l. 10. c. 18.

science, may draw near to God in full assurance of faith; whereas guilt clouds, clogs and distracts the soul. So that you see both the guilt and power of a bosom sin, furnish us with too much cause of distractions. *Sin, That would have all the heart; and God, He will have all or nothing. It's such an offering, that is a whole burnt-offering, that the Lord delights in. As no subject is capable of two contrary qualities, in the intense degrees, (as heat and cold may be both in the same hand, but not in their intense degrees) so the heart of man cannot entertain Christ and corruption, light and darkness, except the one be loved and served superlatively above the other. Psal. 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* † God first stops his ear above, and then the sinners mouth below, that regards iniquity, that likes, loves, approves, or gives it rest and quiet in the soul. Indeed God neither regards him, nor doth such a soul regard God. He must *love* God, that is *lively* in his service. Job 27. 10. *Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* will he always? he may now and then send a thought that way in his special need, but not

* *Ita mala quæ feci, cogitationi meæ suis imaginibus impressit, ut ipsa mea oratione me conturbant. Cæterum quanto graviore tumultu cogitationum carnalium premor, tanto ardentius orationi insistere debeo.* Bern. de inter. Dom. c. 49.

† Look as it is with a boyling pot, the scum of it will be rising up together with the meat therein; so it is in prayer. M. *Calbut of Prayer, p.* 396.

not alwayes: there's difference between converse and communion. One may have converse or traffick with a stranger upon occasion, but communion is with a friend, there's visits of pure kindness: an hypocrite may have some converse, or trading with God for necessaries, but sweet communion, constant calling on God, and serious duties he can never enjoy and follow, that loves any sin before the chiefest Good.

The *Remedies* against a beloved sin are briefly these two.

1. *Consideration*: sit down and think what real good, this sin hath ever done thee. Think what hurt it hath done thee and others: and what fruit but shame and death it brings to any. Thy dearest sin is but sin, which is the worst thing in the world, and its masks and disguises being laid aside, more ugly than the devil, more horrid than hell it self. And think, the more thou lovest it, the more God hates it, and his rage and jealousie is increased with the increase of thy desires. Think how many prayers it hath lost thee, how many mercies it hath poison'd to thee, how many smiles it hath clouded, besides what unutterable sufferings

it hath inflicted upon Christ, and is preparing for thee in hell. Consider, that thou maist have as much joy, happiness and true comfort without it; and all converted sinners confess, that Jesus Christ hath been better to them than all their sins; and if you may have as good injoyments, or better, to have Christ with them, and Heaven after them, will not make them worse.

2. *Supplication* *. Kneel down and pray with faith, in the uprightness of your hearts, for strength from above. All the strength of Heaven is engag'd by prayer. He that heartily sets himself against his sin by prayer, cannot but dislike it, and when it is truly disliked, its heart is broken.

* *Ille laudatur, qui ut cœperit cogitare sordida, statim interficit cogitata & allidit ad petram. Petra autem est Christus.*

Augustine complains, that when he in his unconverted estate begged a divorce from his sin, his heart was afraid, lest God should hear his prayers. Beware lest your hearts secretly cry Spare, when your tongues openly cry, Lord, kill and crucifie my corruption: but do thou *bonâ fide* pull on earth, and the Lord will *bono Spiritu*, pull from Heaven, and rent thy sin and soul asunder. Otherwise, as the Poets tell us of *Hippomanes*, that running

Ovid. Met. lib. 10. 6. 11.

with

with *Atalanta* for victory, he conquered by throwing golden apples down; which *Atalanta* ſtooping to take up, loſt the prize; ſo Satan ſeeing the ſoul running heavenward in God's ſervice, will throw down the gilded temptations of a beloved ſin, ſtop it in its career, and hazard the prize of eternal glory.

SECT. IX.

A *Ninth cauſe* of Diſtractions in the Worſhip of God, is, *Satan* *. And this he doth *ſometimes* more remotely, by throwing in ſome croſs buſineſs before Duties, whereby the ſoul is unhinged: ſome body, or Letter with buſineſs, juſt *before Prayer*; or ſome paſſionate diſtempering paſſages in the family, whereby to lay matter ready for our diſcompoſure, and wandrings in the following duties. *Sometimes* he approaches nearer, and by preſenting and occaſioning objects to our ſenſes *in God's Worſhip*, draws off the heart: He can ſtay *One* long from the Congregation, that *Another* may be diſtracted in obſerving him coming in, and ſo wounds two, and ſometimes twenty

§. 9. IX. Satan.

* *Diabolus cum ſit aſtutus, ſcil. quoniam in tempore orationis grandia poſtulemus & ſæpius impetremus, impedire feſtinat improvidas mentes.* Chryſ. in Matth. Hom. 16.

at a blow: *Satan* is not idle, when this and that child are reſtleſs, and unquiet in the family; whereby perhaps all in the family loſe the paſſages that would moſt profit them. He can create and further diſtraction by every pillar and part of the ſtructure, and every perſon in the congregation; and can be content you read ſentences on the walls, to hinder and divert your ſouls from the ſentences in the Pulpit. Yea, he *often* approaches nearer, and works immediately upon the *Fancy*, upon which he can imprint a thouſand notions, moſt ſtrange and incoherent many times, to ſteal the heart from God, for we are not ignorant (*the more is our ſorrow*) of his devices. Hence we have him, Job 1. 6. *When the ſons of God came to preſent themſelves before the Lord, coming alſo among them.* And being queſtioned, tells his buſineſs is to *go to and fro in the earth*, and to *walk up and down in it*; as if he walked only out of curioſity, or for ſome charitable end: But as our *Lord Jeſus* went up and down, *doing good*; this was his work from morning to night: ſo the Devil walks up and down, *doing evil.* He is in every pue, at every elbow, throwing in his fire-balls, and

and enticing poor souls to commit folly with him; and when *God* is treating with the soul about Heaven and Hell, then comes He * and thrusts the World between, or some vanity therein, to break the treaty, and spoil that sacred conference; so that of all roads, no road is so full of thieves as the road to Heaven.

* Satan cares not how heavenly our words be, if our thoughts be earthly. Mr. *White, of vain thoughts.*

And though to give the *Devil* but his due, we can make shift to be bad enough in an Ordinance without him, yet he waits there no doubt to make us worse: what else should bring thoughts then into our head, that have never come there, in a month or year before? who else should suggest such horrid atheistical thoughts, when we are pinch'd with convictions, and move us to question all, when any thing pursues us? Ephes. 6. 12. *We wrestle against spiritual wickedness in heavenly things or* * *employments.* The devil is wickedness in the abstract, when we are about heavenly work. Never did the crafty *Cheat* watch and spie, how to defraud and slur the innocent Merchant, while he is receiving his cash, as *Satan* lies at catch in the Worship of God, to purloin from us the true treasure, that should make the soul rich. Especially

* Ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις.

*The high-way-ground-bearers had the word taken from them by the devil, that is, by such wandring thoughts as he immediately casts in. Mr. *Angier*, p. 148.

**that* Prayer, or Chapter, or Sermon, that should do thee most good, or most destroy his Kingdom, will he be most busie in. When the *High Priest* was interceding for the poor Church, then *Satan* stood at his right hand to resist him: hence our solemnest Duties, often have the saddest Distractions, and such as have no coherence nor reason for them; but arrows, *fiery darts*, shot out of the Devils own quiver. What a sort of them have I in the very writing hereof, and what long parenthesis between every sentence, and you perhaps will not want, while you are reading, yea, it may be, (as the body, when the humours are stirred by Physick, is worse, so) he will be busiest to divert and trouble your hearts, while the cure is working. But when your heart is prepared before, and watchful in your Duty, though yours be the sorrow, that you have the *womb* that bare them; yet his will be the guilt, because he is the *father* that begets them.

The *Remedy* against *Satan*'s distracting us in God's Worship, is, that of Christ's own prescribing, Matth. 26. 41. *Watch and Pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* Stand upon your guard, give no heed to his

his ſuggeſtions. As you run to the water with the bucket, to quench a ſpark of fire in the thatch; ſo drop a tear of contrition upon this ſpark of temptation. * Treat not with theſe thoughts, but diſmiſs them unregarded, and by ſome ſhort ejaculation call in thy friend, to countermine thine enemy. And ſtill watch and pray. And pray and watch, and alwayes remember, that we have as much need of the *ſtrength* of Chriſt for aſſiſtance, as the *merit* of Chriſt for acceptance in every duty. And be ſure to caſt out his injections with diſdain and hatred. *Nam ſuperbus eſt ſpiritus, & non patitur contemptum.* He is a very proud piece, and cannot endure contempt. The ſtronger is your reſiſtance, the longer will he ſtay away; and the more you hate his motions, the leſs mind he'l have to offer them. The devil is like that *Sanballat*, *Nehem.* 6. 2. &c. that ſent to *Nehemiah*, who was buſie in the work of the Lord; *And I* (ſaith *Nehemiah*) *ſent meſſengers unto them, ſaying, I am doing a great work, ſo that I cannot come down; why ſhould the work ceaſe, whileſt I leave it and come down to you?* Yet they ſent meſſengers unto me *four times* after this ſort, and I anſwered

* *Nam ipſum advertere & examinare iſtas cogitationes, evagari eſt. Itaque te habeas quaſi eas non aſpicere digneris.* Alvarez.

Luther.

swered them after the same manner. Come, says Satan, let's meet and confer, here's a notion and here's a business, you must needs discuss this. Nay, say thou, I am doing a great work for Eternity. As that gallant *Painter*, being demanded a reason of his exact curiosity in his work, answered, *Pingo eternitati*, I paint to last for eternity. So, I am doing a work for eternity, I am pleading the cause that runs for life or death; so that I cannot hearken to thee. Why should my great work cease, while I leave it and come down? Alas, this business will go no farther than it's lifted at, I am rowing upon a River, if I trifle or nod a little, I go down again*. I have a business on the wheel, that cannot be left a minute. If I look away, my iron burns, and I suffer loss. Yet he'l send messengers over and over again, as *Sanballat* did; but still answer them after the same manner. Discourage him, and break his heart with thine obstinate resolution; *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

* It is said, *Gen.* 15. 11. when the fouls did light, *Abraham* drove them away; not when they were sitting or feeding upon the carkasses, but as soon as ever they lighted. We must not give place to these thoughts, no not for a moment. Mr. *White, of vain thoughts.*

SECT.

SECT. X.

THE *Tenth Cause* of Distractions in our Lords service is, *Vain thoughts at other times.* For, §. 10. Vain thoughts out of Duties.

1. *These displease and disengage the spirit of God*; without whose help these Infirmities will crowd in upon us. If you should lodge your *noble friend*, whom Love only moves to visit you, in the same room with a *nasty beggar*, may not he take it for a plain affront, and refuse to come near or help you in your need? even so the *holy Ghost*, your Noblest Friend will take it ill, to be pack't into a room with base and beggarly thoughts, and may justly deny that presence and assistance, which we have need of; and without Gods spirit helping us, we cannot pray as we ought, nor keep out Distractions with all our skill. Rom. 8. 26. *The spirit helpeth our infirmities*, and these wandrings are some of those infirmities, which the spirit must help us about, yea and will, if he be not disobliged, but it is far from likely, that we should have that sacred *Spirit* at our beck in Duty, whom we have distasted all the day long. How justly

juſtly may He ſay, as it is Jer. 11. 15. *What hath my beloved to do in my houſe?* or, as the Margent, *what is to my beloved in my houſe, ſeeing ſhe hath wrought lewdneſs with many?* As if he ſhould ſay, I know not what to do with thee in my houſe, or what thou haſt to do with me, having roved ſo extreamly with thy heart from me, and been lewd with many. Remember it is the *Holy* Ghoſt, who hates a ſinful thought any time of day. That man muſt walk with God *in the Day*, that will have God draw nigh to him *at Night*.

2. *Theſe diſpoſe and naturalize the ſoul to roving.* Habit is a ſecond nature*, and it is almoſt as hard to waſh an Ethiopian white, as to break an evil cuſtome. Jer. 13. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his ſpots, then may ye alſo do* (or think) *good, that are accuſtomed to Evil.* If a man be uſed to ill company, and link't in with them, though he ſometimes reſolve better, yet when they come, away he muſt go with them againſt his purpoſe. Perhaps you have reſolved againſt theſe vain wandrings in *Gods* ſervice, but being us'd to them, they call at door, and take you captive away againſt your

* Hereby holy become Thoughts tedious and painful, for we ſtrive againſt two natures, one that ſin hath brought, and another that Cuſtome hath wrought. Mr. *Angier* p. 141.

your intention. And therefore ſet up a conſtant watch againſt them, for Religion is link't together in the power and practicals of it. So that you muſt take all, or leave all; be a Chriſtian alwayes and altogether, or not at all. It is ſaid of that *accurſed Mahomet* that he had uſed a *Dove* to come to his Ear, and thence to eat her commons, And ſo when the falling ſickneſs ſurpriſed him, his Pigeon preſently came to her repaſt, which he feigned to be the *holy Ghoſt* or an *Angel*, that told him the myſteries of his Religion: my beloved, if theſe fowls, theſe evil Angels be uſed to your ear or heart, they will come even in your moſt Cœleſtial imployments, and divert and diſtract you: and hereby they become leſs ſtrange, and things that are familiar to us, though ugly, are not ſtarted at; nay treble diligence will not diſpel them, if you give them ordinary entertainment. If a way be made over your corn or ground, and people uſed to come that way, it muſt be an higher hedge than ordinary, that muſt keep them off. If vain thoughts have made a road over thy heart, and uſe to come that way without control, it muſt be a very high and ſtrong watch

and

and resistance, that will turn them by, in holy Duties. Prov. 35. 28. *He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a City that is broken down and without Walls.*

3. *These vain thoughts at other times make us apprehend it more impossible to conquer, and less sinfull to be conquered by them.* And when Distractions appear so powerful that there is no resisting them, or so harmless that they are not worth our trouble to resist them, then is a floodgate opened to let them in: when once our courage is conquered, or our Conscience is seared, we are quite undone. And thus you see that one sin ushers in another, and the looseness of our heart at one time, prepares it to be so another. Even as you observe your Children (*'tis the comparison of one that hath the skill of simile's*) they are more unruly before strangers, or at times when they should be most demure, than at other times: and you are then, more aware and troubled at their shrewd words and gestures, than the whole year besides: Alas, It is not meerly, that they are worse then, but then you take more notice of it, it is then most observable and apparent, though

though their carriage be much at one: So it is with your Hearts; O (*cry you*) I am more pestred with fooliſh thoughts in Prayer or Sermon, than all the day or week beſides, Then my Heart is worſt, when it ſhould be beſt. Alas! it's naught all along, it do's but as it is uſed to do, only you obſerve it not at other times, and now obſerve it a little and find it out, but its alwayes ſo.

4. *Theſe do infect the memory* *, and imprint ſuch ſpecies and notions there, as offer and produce themſelves, when we are in the ſervice of God. And ſo when a *good man out of the good treaſure of his heart ſhould bring forth good things*, He ſtumbles upon the vain and unprofitable traſh, before laid up in his memory, to the grief of Gods ſpirit, and hazard of his own. The memory, you know, will moſt eaſily retain an impertinent ſtory, a filthy or fooliſh imagination a long time, and then when an Idle heart hits upon it, (though God himſelf looks on) that will run away with the heart, and give both matter and ſtrength to a long, woful, and wandring Diſtraction.

* *Sed cùm ſe mens ad ſtudium orationis erexerit, tarum rerum imagines reverberata patitur, quibus libenter prius otioſa premebatur.* Greg. in Job l. 10. c. 16.

How

How doth the * active fancy in our sleep sometimes light upon some sorry thoughts we had in the day, and take them by the end, and spin them out into a very sinful Dream? and this, *Casuists* say, we are responsible for, though it seem involuntary: because we administred matter for it, and remotely promoted it: so we shall be found guilty before God, even of our unwilling wandring in Gods service, because we laid up for them before. If we brew for them, Satan will be sure to broach them.

* Hence *cogitatio à cogendo, quia voluntas cogit memoriam ut proferat materiam, cogit etiam intellectum ad formandum*, Bern. Ep. de vit. Solit.

5. *These idle thoughts*, at other times, *provoke God to give us up to our own inventions*. As that dreadful word, Hos. 4. 17. *Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone*. Seeing he will be marryed to them, and forsake me, let him take them. If a man be resolved upon Idols or any other sin, God will not hinder him. So when he finds the heart joyned, taken up, and pleased with vain thoughts; Good motions knock and wait, but are not accepted or heeded; come and knock again with double earnestness, *How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* but are not regarded, sin and the heart are making merry within; come and try once more,

more, open now or never; And no answer, nay, now the Soul is joyned to theſe things, *let him alone.* Sleep on now, and take thy reſt. Trouble him no more in his vain inventions. *So I gave them over,* Pſal. 81. 12. *to their own hearts-luſt, and they walked in their own counſels.* If they chooſe Hell before Heaven, let them take it. My Spirit ſhall not alwayes ſtrive with man. And now when the Soul is given up to a vagabond frame, then thy weak purpoſes, and faint watchfulneſs over it ſtand for nothing, but are broken like *Sampſons* cords; and a deluge of all manner of impertinencies breaks in, and the Heart is proſtituted to all temptations.

The Remedy againſt theſe idle thoughts out of Duties is,

1. *A right underſtanding what a vain thought is.* Though it ſound ſomewhat harſh, that all thoughts are either good or bad, the matter of ſome being in it ſelf indifferent; yet if we conſider the Principle and Tendency of them, we ſhall hardly light upon one individual thought, but it hath either the ſtamp of Good or evil upon it. It is certain, that a wicked mans thoughts are all vain, as they

they come from him, neither flowing from a ſanctified heart, nor being directed to a Divine end. Ah poor ſinners, your hearts are little worth, the imaginations of them are *materially* or *formally* or *finally* evil, only evil and that continually. The ſweeteſt words from corrupt lungs do ſtink in the noſtrills of them that ſtand by, and ſo your beſt thoughts coming from corrupt hearts, cannot be right in the ſight of God.

And then for a gracious man, it ſhould ſeem every thought comes either from the old man or the New, the regenerate or unregenerate part, eſpecially if we conſider that there is hardly a thought but it may be reſolved ultimately either into Chriſt or Self, Let it therefore be concluded, that every thought that is not ſuggeſted, or directed by the Spirit of God, and that no way conduceth to the glory of God, the good of your neighbour, nor the good of your own ſoul or body, is a vain thought, vain or void, it might be ſpared, it ſtands for nothing, its worſe than nothing.

* The greateſt Good and Evil that ever was in the world, was firſt but a little thought. Mr. *Angier* p. 171.

2. *Be throughly convinced that vain thoughts are Sins* *; They are not free from

from the Law of God, though they be free from the lash of man. The *Rabbins* had a strange exposition of that, Psal. 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me*; they read it thus, *If iniquity do but remain within the heart* (be not produced into act) *God will not regard it*; and so the *Pharisees* of the Decalogue, as if God had only forbidden the outward acts of sin; but there is nothing more contrary to the nature of God, or of his Law, or of the souls of men than this. I wonder how they could over-look all these direct passages in the Old Testament, Levit. 19. 17. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy heart*, ——*Thou shalt not say in thy heart*, and innumerable such. No, no thoughts are words before God, *Ezek. 11. 5. *I know the things that come into your mind, every of them.* What is sin, but a deviation or transgression of the Law of God? and this is a woful thing. Sin even in a thought is a woful thing; Nay, words and actions are as it were sins at second hand; the very first life, and freshest vigour of all ill, is immediately inspired into the thoughts. Hence it is that *Peter* adviseth *Simon Magus* to pray to God, if it were possible, that the thoughts of his heart might be

* *Quod agunt hominibus dicta, eadem Deo cogitationes.* Bern. formul. hon. vitæ.

See Mr. *Bolton's* discourse of true happiness, p. 126.

forgiven him; as though *there* lay the greatest guilt, and deepest stain before God*. Alas, one vain thought would bring down the highest Angel into the lowest Hell: and that which would damn an Angel, will damn thee, except thou repent. If millions of Angels have fallen by a sinful thought, and yet thou standest under the guilt of many, thank Free Grace, and the Death of Christ for that; but yet thy sin is still as bad, and thou hadst need to *cleanse the filthiness of the spirit, as well as of the flesh.*

* *Sicut enim vipera à filiis in ventre adhuc positis occiditur, ita nos occidunt cogitationes nostræ intra nos enutritæ.* Bern. *de modo bene vivendi.* Ser. 29.

3. *Daily wind up your spiritual watch,* and renew your Covenants with God in prayer. Draw all your parts and faculties into Covenant, Job 31. 1. *I made a Covenant with my eyes. Why then should I think upon a Maid?* Behold the blessed purity of this mans heart! Neither eye nor thought of his should wander after a Maid: and this he vows. Though good purposes are the shifts of Hypocrites, whose Covenants to God are like ropes of Sand, broken as soon as made; yet when they are accompanied with repentance for former falls, and hearty indeavour for future performance, no better sign of an upright Christian. Know, that constant

conſtant watchfulneſs is a duty; that as Nature hath provided a cover for the eye, ſo Grace hath prepared watchfulneſs for the ſoul; and as it would be a fearful ſight to ſee an eye without a lid, it would ſoon be put out; ſo it is a fearful and dangerous thing to keep a ſoul without its caſe, without its watch, Prov. 23. 17. *Let not thy heart envy* (or imitate) *ſinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long*; not only at prayer-times, but all the day long. Be ſure that every morning you ſincerely and ſolemnly relieve your watch, by new purpoſes and prayers, and then when vain thoughts offer to come in, you may ſay, *I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgements.* And labour, that all your thoughts may hold weight with that excellent Scripture, Phil. 4. 8. *Finally, Brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.*

4. *Repent thoroughly and heartily for them.* For as Humiliation without Reformation, is a foundation without a build-

ing; ſo Reformation without Humiliation, is a building without a foundation, which the next wind of temptation will throw down. *To waſh the heart*, (mark, it muſt not be ſwept only) in the briniſh tears of Repentance, is the *way to diſlodge vain thoughts from within you*, Jer. 4. 18. If you felt the ſmart and bitter pangs of true Repentance to night for your vain thoughts, it would affright and mortifie the heart from them to morrow; you would have no mind to tamper with the vanities that coſt you ſo dear: The burnt child would dread the fire, and the freſh remembrance of the heart-ach you had for theſe gueſts laſt day, would bolt them out from coming in to day. If our ſins did coſt us in *David*'s ſenſe, *broken bones*, we ſhould not ſo eaſily ſin again. If the Scholar, after his truanting, ſtole to his place unobſerv'd and uncorrected, he will eaſily venture on his freaks again to morrow; but if he taſted the Rod, the ſmart he felt, will ſomewhat warn and keep him from ſuch follies again. Ah Sirs! our Repentance is eaſie, and our confeſſions complements; we forgive our ſelves, ere God forgive us; we can lick our ſelves whole, without the coſt of a tear or ſigh, and

and then we are ready for a sin again: He that finds it easie to repent, will not find it hard to sin. Verbal Repentance will never cure you of real sins. It is your sad thoughts that will prevent your vain ones, * and idle thoughts are best excluded by keeping the heart full of good ones.

* *Quia enim semper cogitamus, exquirenda sunt nobis bona, ne mala cogitemus.* Greg. in 1 Reg. c. 14.

SECT. XI.

THe *Eleventh Cause* of wandring thoughts in the Ordinances of God, is, *a divided heart*, James 1. 6, 8. *For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the Sea, driven with the wind and tossed.* The forlorn picture of a roving heart, carryed up and down, as the wind of any temptation pleaseth: The Cause, *ver.* 8. A double mind: *A double minded man is unstable in all his waies.* The word signifies * one that hath two souls; one that *speaks with a double heart*, Psal. 12. 2. Like that *prophane Piece*, that bragged he had two souls in one body; one for God, the other for any thing that came. This man is the unstable man in God's service, off and on with God, unfixed to his business,

§. 11. XI. A divided heart.

* Δίψυχος ἀνὴρ.

knows not what he would have, prayes and unprayes, wants faith for the ballaſt of his ſoul, and ſo is carryed at the pleaſure of every wave; and then *ver.* 7. is the miſery of this frame. *Let not this man think that he ſhall obtain any thing of the Lord*; that is (as ſome) though God may anſwer ſuch requeſts out of his ſuperabundant mercy, yet ſuch a man can look for nothing. Though a diſtracted prayer may receive ſomething, yet it cannot expect any thing from God; when a mans ſupplication is a provocation, there is little hope: He that puts Treaſon into his petition, has little reaſon to hope for a good anſwer.

Now an heart may be ſaid to be divided in a duty theſe waies:

1. When all the heart is not ingaged therein; as when underſtanding or conſcience without the will or affections. This opens a door unto diſtractions, Eph. 6. 6. *Doing the Will of God from the heart, with good will doing ſervice as to the Lord, and not to men.* Half an heart can do nothing with God. A man may as well with one eye obſerve the ſtars, and with the other meaſure the Earth at the ſame time, as at once diſpatch affairs with God and man. Hereby

Hereby both buſineſſes are ſpoiled: Conſcience of God hinders from any diſcreet and ſerious contrivance of any thing in his preſence; and tampering with the world, provokes God, and hinders the affairs above. Our Lord Chriſt is moſt peremptory in that caſe: Ye cannot ſerve two Maſters, the one will be over-ſerved, *ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.*

2. The heart may be ſaid to be divided, when it is unfixed and indeterminate; wavering and unſetled. A duty to God is ſhooting at an hairs breadth; if a man be uncertain and unſteady, how ſhall he hit the mark? Pſal. 57. 7. *O God, my heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, I will ſing and give praiſe.* Now the work is likely to go on. You cannot (it ſeems) ſo much as ſing a Pſalm, or give the Lord praiſe without this fixedneſs of heart. As you have ſeen the *Needle* in a Compaſs, waver up and down perpetually, till it point towards the North, then it is fixed and ſtandeth ſtill: ſo untill the ſoul be compoſed, and bent directly towards God, it wanders, and trifles everlaſtingly.

3. The heart is divided by Hypocriſie, James 4. 8. *Puriſie your hearts, ye double minded.* As he ſpeaks to open ſinners

to *cleanse their hands*, so to close Hypocrites, to *purifie their hearts*, that is, be sincere: An Hypocrite is a man of two hearts, and both little worth; one good one is worth a thousand pair of double hearts. Hence holy *David*, Psal. 86. 11. *Unite my heart to fear thy Name*, else I shall have one heart to move me towards thee, and another heart to fetch me back again. One heart for God, another for *Baal*, and so shall halt between them.

4. The heart is divided, when you perform not his service with all your might and strength, Jer. 48. 10. *Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently*, loosely, that unbends his bow, that unstrings his heart in the Lord's service *. He that is studying with all his might, the least noise or word distracts him, and troubles him: he cannot admit or abide the least diversion: So he that is intent with all his might in God's service, cannot give room for the least by-thought. No, I am before the Lord, and I can do but little, but I'le do what I can, Psal. 103. 1. *Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy Name.* And this leads us to the Remedy for this Cause.

* Χεὴ τὴν προσευχὴν μὴ ἐν συλλαβαῖς, &c. *Nostram ad Deum orationem non syllabarum nexibus absolvere nos oportet, sed fiducia potius animi voluntate.* Basil. conc. de oratione.

The Remedy for a divided heart is, *get sincerity*

cerity and ſeriouſneſs. And indeed the ſoul that is ſincere, is ſerious. The real Beggar begs in good earneſt, he cries, he weeps, he heeds not the playing of the children, the barking of the doggs, not he; his wants pinch him, his ſtomach pulls and craves, nothing but meat will pleaſe him: There's muſick perhaps within, and company without, but all's one to him, he is not concerned therewith, he's hungry in good earneſt, and therefore ſtill he cries for bread: So it is with the upright and ſerious heart, he is really and deeply preſt down with ſin, and needy of grace and comfort; he ſees the reality of inviſible things; he fears the anger of *God*, and feels his broken bones, and therefore let the Devil, or the world, diſturb what they can, or ſuggeſt what they will, he plyes his buſineſs, he muſt have pardon and grace, and the light of the Lord's countenance: It is not the ſtirring of a feather can unhinge him, for he is in good earneſt, Jer. 30. 21. *For who is this that hath engaged his heart, to draw nigh to me, ſaith the Lord.* Where ſits that man, that gives a heart to God? the Lord cryes, who? O let every one that hears or reads this, cry out, *Lord, it is I*; and when the heart, the

the whole heart is engaged in a duty, then work goes on. There's a vaſt difference between the pleading of an *Orator*, and the pleading of a *Malefactor* : The former hath perhaps a more ſmooth, elegant and ſtarcht diſcourſe, but he handles it with a light finger; a friend, a fee would take him off; but the Malefactor that pleads for his life, he ſweats, he cryes, he begs, the Judge interrupts him, but he goes on; the Jaylor ſtops his mouth, but he will proceed; all the Court cannot diſtract his mind from his buſineſs, his heart is wholly in it. And ſo it is with a ſincere and ſerious Saint : He can truly ſay, Lord, thou haſt more of my heart, than ever any creature in the world had; my heart is fixed, I am ſet upon this affair *: The great matters I am about, I neither can live, nor dare die without them, and therefore blame me not to be buſie. It is the *dear* prayer that prevails, the prayer that coſts us *dear*.

* *Gregor. Nazianz.* tells of his Siſter *Gorgonia*, being ſick of an incurable diſeaſe, proſtrated her ſelf at the Altar, *minantem ſe non prius Altare dimiſſuram quam ſacta eſſet ſanitatum :* And cryes out, *O honeſtam Impudentiam!* And ſhe went whole away.

SECT.

SECT. XII.

THE *Twelfth Cause* of wandring Thoughts in God's Worship, is, *an opinion that there is no great evil in them*; which *partly* proceeds from that Notion, that thoughts are free, or at least, that no sin is really sin, except it be voluntary, and these are without consent; *partly* from our being used to greater sins, which do widen the conscience to digest these lesser ones, without any straining: And *partly* from the commonness of them, being the snares wherein we are most frequently taken; and the oftner they walk thorow the heart, the less strange are they there; the more familiar they are, the more apology we have for them; and so usually it becomes no sin, that we have a mind unto *.

§. 12. XII. An opinion of no great evil in them.

* *Non feci; si feci, non malè feci; si malè, non multum malè; si multum malè, non malâ intentione.* Bern.

And now, when there is bred in the soul, an opinion that there is no evil, or next to none therein; the heart is pleased with that, and merrily playes with those baits, till by the hidden hook it's caught in the hidden snare of the Devil. To rectifie this mistake,

1. Somewhat must *be granted*: The evil

evil in these wandring thoughts, is not so great, as in many other sins: these do not *vastare conscientiam*, lay the conscience waste, as some others, especially those roving thoughts, as are rather injected, than contrived; the matter whereof is good, not evil, and which are short and sorrowed for: But who will swallow a Spider, and say, there is not so much poison in this as in a Toad; or break his legg, and say, there is not such danger therein, as in breaking the neck? even so, it is a poor plea to say, these *peccadillo's*, trivial things are not like oaths, and murders, and oppression, *&c.* But these are great enough to displease God, to bind guilt upon the soul, to prepare for greater, and bid fair for Hell.

2. Something must *be answered*, as namely, 1. That though our thoughts are free from the notice of men on Earth, or Satan in Hell, further than they are imprinted in the body or actions; though they are free from the punishment of humane Laws, yet are they not free from the eye, nor Law, nor wrath of God, as you heard in divers instances before, and particularly in the case of *Simon Magus*, Act. 8. 22. And 2. That other Notion is

is corrupt, that nothing is culpable that is involuntary : It's true, this doth extenuate a fault, but this doth not entinguish it : 'tis a less fault in that case, but it is a fault * ; for the understanding may be depraved, as well as the will ; and we are really guilty in *Adam*'s sin, though we had no previous consent therein. It is a fault that we are capable subjects for such sinful injections, though we yield not to them ; for there is something in us that incourages those attempts : the Angels meet with none of these. The will in a sort lyes dormant when we are asleep, and yet † Casuists say, there wants no sin, even in our dreams ; for the fancy and the memory may be corrupted, as well as the will ; and therefore it follows, these wandring thoughts may be *against God's Will*, though they be *besides our own*. And 3. For our accustomedness to greater sins, and frequency in those, that signifies little herein: for crimes do not excuse faults. The Stars are the same in the firmament all day, though while the Sun shines, they appear not ; when the Sun is retired, they will shew themselves : while your greater staring sins appear, these are nothing ; but if ever a night of terrour come upon you, then

* Nay, in some respects, the more involuntary any sin is, the more strong and natural it is ; and the more natural, the more horrible ; as a natural thief is worse than a deliberate thief, who sometimes steals : and in this respect, involuntary sins may be worst of all. *Shepherd's* Select cases.

† *Aquin.* 22.*e.* *q.* 154. *act.* 5.

then each of these will shine in its proper guilt, in the eye of conscience, And then 4. The commonness of them adds to their sinfulness, though it take from your sense thereof. If your neighbour for a time break over your hedge, and tread your corn, the matter is soon put up, 'tis but a trespass by chance; but if he daily use it, and make it his way, you think it's intolerable: So if a wandring thought stole in once a week, it were a less offence; but if they will transgress, and make a way over *God*'s ground, spoil his Garden often in every day, this makes the sin the greater, though the sense of it be the less *.

* *Tu qui dicis peccatum parvum, velim scire, quoties tale peccatum admittis, si tot parvulas plagas in corpore aut maculas & scissuras in vestibus fieri velis.* August.

3. Something must *be advised* for cure. And that is, 1. A true knowledge, and deep sense of the nature of sin, whereby you will see, that no sin can be little; that there is more evil in the least sin, in a vain thought, than in all the Plagues and Judgements in the world besides. Hence, saith God, Jer. 6. 19. *Behold I will bring evil upon this people even the fruit of their thoughts.* All the possible sorrows that can tear the mind and soul; all the sickness

sickness and sores that can be inflicted on every part of the body; all the mischiefs that can sink thy name and estate, (put them all together) amount not to that real evil, that is in the least sin *. For it is an offence to God, displeasing him whom the Angels study to please, and would not offend for ten thousand worlds. Psal. 51. 4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned.* The greatest evil in sin, is that 'tis against God; by it you provoke the highest Majesty, displease the sweetest Nature, and offend your chiefest Friend. And if I know a little thing will offend such a person, I am a wretch, for a little thing to offend so great and good a friend. Might not *Adam* have argued thus, 'tis but an Apple, there can be no great hurt in this; what's this to breed a jarr between *God* and me? and yet we have found that little Figg or Apple, a great sin. Here was all, *God* was disobeyed, his Will opposed, his Soveraignty and Mercy trodden under foot; and this is the nature of sin: whereof, if the soul have a deep sense, it will excuse no longer, but frighted at the hideous look thereof, fly even into the fire to escape it, Psal. 119. 113. *I hate vain thoughts: but thy Law do I love.* I not only

* The least infirmities do break the first covenant of works, and hence you do not only deserve, but are under the sentence of death, and curse of God, by the most involuntary, accidental infirmity, according to that, *Gal.* 3. 10. Mr. *Shepher*'s select cases.

only avoid them, but I *hate* them; I ſee a ſinning evil in them, I ſee a damning evil in them. I hate *vain* thoughts; not only wicked, wanton, revengeful, proud, or blaſphemous thoughts, but vain thoughts; empty thoughts fill me with grief*. Natural conſcience may abhor the former, but a ſoft heart can only oppoſe the latter. And there is the means he uſed; *Thy Law do I love*; he that loves a pure Law, cannot but hate a vain thought.

* Though to live in the greateſt ſin, may conſiſt with the form of Godlineſs, yet to live in the leaſt, may not with the power thereof.

2. You muſt apprehend the evils, yea, the great evils that are in this ſin. For though we grant, there is more of poiſon in ſome other crimſon ſins, and in ſome diſtractions more than others, yet there is much evil in the leaſt of theſe; which, on purpoſe to whet and ripen your moſt ſerious reſolutions againſt them, (and ſee they attain that effect) I ſhall now in the *ſeventh place* diſcover:

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Evil of Distractions.

Cap. 7. The Evil of Distractions.

SECT. I.

§. 1.

THE *Evil of Distractions*, is, 1. In their Nature. 2. In their Effects. Take the former in these demonstrations.

They are sins against the first Table.

1. These distractions in God's Worship, are *sins against the first Table.* And these proportionably are ever greater than those against the second. Though the offence of them be properly against the second Commandment, yet they have a fling against every precept of the first Table *. For how doth he acknowledge God, that in his very presence offends him? or how dost thou honour, love and delight in him, as the chiefest Good, when thou startest aside from converse with him, to parley with the world and sin?

* It would be an heinous offence among the incense offered to God to have put brimstone. Thy prayers are thine incense, but thy distractions are brimstone, that stink in his nostrils. *Chrys. Hom. 73. in Matth.*

There's the *first Commandment* broken. Do you worſhip him according to his will, that thus worſhip him? If material Images be caſt off, and ſpiritual fornication committed, ye are ſtill breakers of that Commandment. A graven Image in the mind, a worldly or wicked fancy there, where Chriſt ſhould be, cannot but provoke him to be very angry. There's the *ſecond Commandment* broken. And theſe manifeſtly break the *third Commandment*, being a palpable *taking his great Name in vain*. To ſpeak of God, and think of the world: to hold diſcourſe with him, and think of your luſts, is an high taking his Name in vain. As if the wife ſhould be ſpeaking buſily with her huſband, and at the ſame time looking at the picture of the Paramour, what rage would this beget in her huſband's heart? To make the Name of God a cloak for the things, the nothings of the world, for the worſt thing ſin, is the ſaddeſt ſacriledge; and for which he will not hold you guiltleſs, if he find you griefleſs. And then the *fourth Commandment* is broken by a plain rape, and theft committed of God's holy time; that which you * deſtinate, at your

* God forbids us to find our pleaſure on his holy day, *Iſa.* 58. 13. And do we not find our pleaſure by our Thoughts? Mr. *Angier*, p. 125.

kneeling

kneeling down to his ſervice, is purloyned away by theſe roving thoughts, eſpecially when they invade the Sabbath. For when you ſeem to give him much, in effect it comes to nothing; ſift out the bran of your wandring thoughts, and the flower of cordial ſervice will be next to nothing. And ſo your time is loſt, your duty loſt, and danger of your ſouls loſs after all. And thus you ſee the *firſt Table* broken at a blow: It is a ſad blow that breaks four Commands at once.

SECT. II.

§. 2. Diſtractions are heart-ſins. * *Non eſt reus, niſi mens ſit rea.* A maxime in Law.

THE *ſecond Evil* in their Nature, is, * *That they are heart-ſins*, Pſal. 5. 9. *There is no faithfulneſs in their mouths, their inward part is very wickedneſs.* As wounds in the inwards are moſt dangerous, becauſe hard to come at and cure. Hence it is far eaſier to cure a ſwearer of ſwearing, than a roving heart of its diſtractions. And as theſe ſins are more dangerous, ſo are they very diſpleaſing. The heart is *God's-Acre*, the incloſure he keeps for his own walk and delight. He hath ſaid, *Prov.* 23. 26. *My Son, give me thy heart.* Now

to injure him of his peculiar, to lay the filthy excrements of our ſinful diſtractions under his moſt bleſſed noſtrills (to ſpeak with moſt deep reverence and grief) to thruſt him out of his Manſion-houſe on Earth, the heart; this is no ſmall injury, affront, and unkindneſs. And ſuch a *backſlider in heart, ſhall be filled with his own waies*, if he fill not the ſacred bottles with his tears. And they are * more heavy to the conſcience, in that they meet with no ſhame or trouble without, which is the ordinary lot of other ſins, but are begun and perfected in the heart within; and their guilt is more, becauſe their ſhame is leſs. And they do thereupon leave (as ſuch other ſins do) a deeper ſting of remorſe, and horrour of conſcience, when the conſcience is awake. There is much evil in theſe, Ezek. 6. 9. *I am broken with their whoriſh* HEART, *which hath departed from me.*

* Outward ſins are *majoris infamiæ*: Inward ſins are *majoris reatûs*. As bleeding inward kil's.

SECT. III.

§. 3. Diſtractions are ſins in the ſpecial Preſence of God.

THE *third Evil* in the nature of them, is, *That they are ſins in the ſpecial Preſence of God.* We read, *Ezek.* 8. 16. of

of God, ſhewing the Prophet with infinite wrath, *five and twenty men at the door of the Temple of the Lord, between the Porch and the Altar, with their backs towards the Temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the Eaſt, and they worſhipped the Sun towards the Eaſt.* This he highly reſented, that in his Temple they ſhould have their faces towards the Sun, and turn their backs on him. This is the manners of a roving heart. In God's own preſence he turns his back on God, and his face to the things under the Sun, and thoſe he worſhips. O infinite patience! that turns not ſuch a ſoul into a Pillar of Salt, yea, throws it not into a Pit of Brimſtone! Ezek. 5. 11. *Therefore as I live, ſaith the Lord God, ſurely* (ſee how he binds it with double ſtrength) *becauſe thou haſt defiled my Sanctuary with all thy deteſtable things, and with all thy abominations, therefore I alſo will diminiſh thee —— A third part ſhall die with the Peſtilence.* Which of all thy deteſtable ſins, but thou haſt had a fling at in the Sanctuary and Preſence of God? now a proud, now a wanton, then a worldly thought. Ah, ſayes God, I cannot bear it. He that provokes me to my face, ſhall feel it *. Few think theſe

* *Oras, loquens ad ſponſam; legis, ille tibi loquitur.* Hieron. ad Euſtoch. tom. 1. p. 142.

ſins have brought the Plague, no more than the *Corinthians* did their unworthy partaking at the Lord's Table. In his ſpecial preſence he looks at thee, as I may ſay, with both eyes, Pſal. 90. 8. *He ſets all our iniquities before him*, but he places theſe *ſecret ſins in the light of his countenance*. O this is an evil thing, and a bitter, that thou ſhouldeſt provoke the Lord to his face, and that his fear doth not awe thee, Jer. 32. 11. *Yea, in my houſe have I found their wickedneſs, ſaith the Lord*; this dyes it with a double dye. *I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be thou perfect*, Gen. 17. 1. To believe you are ſitting, ſtanding, kneeling before God ſhould make us perfect *. How demurely doth the Child ſtand before his Father, the Scholar before his Maſter? and ſhall the Child of God only forget himſelf? the pooreſt Scholar, before the beſt of Maſters? Famous was that execution, Levit. 10. 12. Two of *Aaron's* Sons came with their Cenſers, *and offered ſtrange fire BEFORE the Lord, which he commanded them not, and there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died BEFORE the Lord.* Behold the dreadful hand of God! before him was their ſin, before him they

* *Ut peccet, ubi neſcit eſſe Deum.* Bern. de mod. bene viv. Serm. 29.

they were puniſhed. Lord! how terrible art thou in thy holy place! If no place will deter them from ſin, no place ſhall be a ſanctuary to them from Judgement. What are diſtracted thoughts but ſtrange fire? and a *ſtrange puniſhment may the workers of iniquity have, if timely Repentance prevent not.

* A greater curſe goeth with an evil thought in God's ſervice, than if it were another time; times of bleſſing perverted, are times of greateſt curſe. Mr. *Angier*. p. 123.

SECT. IV.

§. 4. Diſtractions are ſins about the moſt ſerious buſineſs.

THE *fourth Evil* in their Nature, is *That they are ſins about the moſt ſerious buſineſs* *. The moſt grand affairs under the Sun, are tranſacted in an Ordinance. I have read of a *Noble Man* of this Nation, that when his Cauſe of Life and Death was trying, though he had a pardon in his pocket at the ſame time, he was irrevocably ſentenced, being that while aſleep; he was ſleeping, while the Judge was ſentencing, was not this a groſs neglect, and did not he (trow ye) bite his nails, and beat his head, that could

* *Claudatur contra adverſarium pectus, & ſoli Deo pateat — nec aliud habeamus in corde, & aliud in voce, quaſi ſit aliud quod magis dicas, cogitare, quam quod cum Deo loqueris.* Cyprian. de Orat. Domin.

not watch, when his head was in queſtion? Sinner, thy head, and life, and ſoul, and all are in queſtion: thy eternal happineſs is handling, or thy dreadful ſentence paſſing, and is this a time to trifle and ſtraggle away from God? If you ſhould come to the elbow of a *Counſellor* pleading at the Bar, much more of one impeach't for *Treaſon*, and tell them, ſuch a companion hath ſent for them to the Tavern, or that ſuch a Cock is like to win the Game, the Cattel broken into ſuch a field, ſuch a game at Cheſs likely to be loſt; with what diſdain and indignation would they turn back ſuch a meſſage, and cry, Is this time to trouble me with theſe things? when the very hearing of ſuch an errand may loſe my cauſe, or hazard my life *. Are Cocks, or Corn, or Companions, parallel to immortal ſouls? what are theſe to the things between God and me? If the dead muſt not be buried, when Chriſt calls; nor a man ſtay to take leave of his friends, how greatly doth he treſpaſs that runs riot after toys and ſins, when the great God calls and calls again?

* Conſider what a prayer is worth; every thing is worth, according to what we can have for it, why, a man may have grace and glory for a fervent prayer. If you ſhould ſell that for a trifle, when another had thouſands for the ſame, wouldeſt thou not befool thy ſelf? *Mr. Wright of vain thoughts. p. 80.*

We

We have a clear instance, *Luk.* 10. 41, 42. the Preacher was at *Martha*'s house, and serious in his Sermon: *Martha* (good woman) was highly cumbred, and distracted with much serving: *Mary* sate at her Saviour's feet, and heard his word. Saith *Martha*, I think it much that my Sister must have all the Dainties, and I all the Distractions: Master, rectifie this inequality. Ah, saith our Lord, *Martha, Martha, thou art cumbred* (or as the word signifies *distracted*) *about many things: But one thing is needful. Mary* is imbarked in a most necessary affair, and worldly cumber is improper for an heavenly business. She that's working for her soul, hath work enough at that time. Salvation, Eternal salvation! Eternal salvation of soul and body; these are not things to dally about.

SECT. V.

§. 5. Distractions are sins of Hypocrisie.

THE *fifth Evil* of these rovings of heart, is, *That they are sins of Hypocrisie**. And there can be no little evil in

* *Nec cum Psalmum dico, attendo cujus Psalmus est. Idcirco magnam injuriam Deo facio, cum illum precor ut meam precem exaudiat, quam ego qui fando non audio, deprecor illum ut mihi intendat, ego verò nec mihi nec illi intendo.* Bern. Med. c. 8.

the ſin of Hypocriſie. What is Hypocriſie? *Matth.* 15. 7, 8. But the *Honour* of the lips, and the *Diſtance* of the heart, *vox & præterea nihil*, as it is ſaid of the Nightingale, a ſound of words, and no ſoundneſs in the heart, that's Hypocriſie; of all ſins moſt odious unto God and man. And though the purpoſe of the heart be wanting to make it formal, and full Hypocriſie, yet a cuſtome in theſe will beget that at length, and he that uſeth to *lye in jeſt*, will come at length to *lye in earneſt*, Hoſ. 11. 12. *Ephraim compaſſeth me about with lyes.* Oh how often may the Lord ſay over us, theſe people compaſs me about with lyes. What a Generation of Vipers are here! like the Viper that's ſpeckled without, and poiſonous within! *Moſes* took a vail, when he ſpake to *Iſrael*, and put it off, when he ſpake to God. But the Hypocrite doth quite contrary, he ſhews his beſt to men, his worſt to God, but the Lord ſees both the vail, and the face; and it's hard to ſay, whether he hates more the vail of diſſimulation, or their face of wickedneſs. This 'tis a diſappointing of God, in a ſenſe a deceiving of him, Mal. 1. 4. *Curſed be the deceiver, that hath in his flock a Male, and voweth and ſacrificeth to God a corrupt thing.*

thing. Yea, sayes God, you have in your flock a Male, you can be serious when you will, but a corrupt thing (it seems) will serve my turn; you disappoint me, you deceive me, you appoint a meeting between an heart and me, and here I come, and the heart is gone; you knock at my door with great earnestness, and when I come, the heart is gone: you are deceivers, and deserve my curse. If this be not repented and reformed, such deceitful Hypocrites must carry away no blessing of mine, but a curse.

A prayer, though but of forty words sincerely made and felt every syllable shall prevail more with God, than a long Oration with half an heart: and the meanest Sermon heard with a prepared, humble, and attentive heart, shall receive a greater blessing, than a better sermon with a worser heart: for God is a spirit, and shews do work nothing with him: he that seems to serve him, and doth not, exasperates him the more. An eye to Heaven, and an heart for Hell, an humble kee, and a haughty spirit, a serious posture, and a frivolous soul, are abominable to the Lord *.

* Thy wandring duties, Satan keeps as bills of Indictment against the great day: what is good in them, he layes before thee now, to quiet thy conscience; but miserable comforters are those which *pacifie* the conscience, but *purifie* it not. Mr. *White* p. 86.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

§. 6. Diſtractions alienate the heart from duties.

IN the next place, the Evil of Diſtractions is ſeen in the *Effects*, whereof theſe are ſome.

First, *They do alienate the heart from holy duties* *. When we miſs of God, we have ſmall mind to his ſervice again. It is the compariſon of a learned Divine, when there is no marrow in the bone, we quickly throw the bone away; even ſo when the ſweet injoyment of God is not found in an Ordinance, which is loſt by the roving heart, we ſhall ere long caſt away that Ordinance, except ſhame or cuſtome reſtrain us. Now when the ſoul cares not for prayer, or other Ordinances, it is a ſad effect: the Lord may ſay to thee, with more right and reaſon, than *Dalilah* did, Judg. 16. 15. *How canſt thou ſay, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?* What love is that without an heart? where the affection is, there the cogitation will be alſo. I may truly invert this, and ſay, where the heart is not before, there love will not come after. Let all the ſoul be ſeriouſly beſtowed in any duty of prayer, ſinging, reading, or hearing, and you

* In this ſenſe they are a curſe; for what is a curſe but ſeparation from God, think then when wandring thoughts come to us in holy duties, the curſe comes, and when they ſtay with us, the curſe ſtayes. Mr. *Augier.* p. 186.

you will be loth to leave that duty, and long to be at it again. O the sweetness therein, and love thereunto! Psal. 119. 93. *I shall never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickned me.* Oh when shall I come and appear before God! O that every day were a Sabbath, then should I be well, as said that famous * Instance of Practical Piety. Hence, with a gracious heart, one duty prepares, and gets a stomach for another. But you shall find, when the heart is out of tune, and beating about the bush, and not half quarter of it with God; O then it is the most wearisome imployment in the world! A man had rather thresh than pray, that hath his heart in the Barn, when he is in prayer. And there is no lively desires, or longings of soul to that business, wherein he felt so little of God. Hence it is so hard to get a worldly family to get together to prayer; Alas! the duty is a distraction to them; when they come, they still leave their hearts behind them; you can make them no penny-worth of an Ordinance, whose hearts do usually run out of an Ordinance.

Mr. *Bruen* of *Bruen-staple-ford.* Cesar.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

§. 7. Distractions affront the Majesty of God.

THE *second Effect* of Distractions, is *That they much affront the Majesty of God* *. It was an high affront to God, *Act.* 7. 39. that his people, after they had had experience of him, yet in *their hearts turned back into* Egypt. This is the wisdom of a roving heart; Come, say they, we like not this blessed presence, nor work in our hearts: let's walk into the world again, Ezek. 11. 21. *But as for them, whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things, I will recompence their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God.* Here one detestable thing offers it self, and there another: for every thing that draws the heart from God, its chief good, is therein detestable: Now when *the heart walks after them*, that is the right vein of distractions. Where the heart walks after every trifle, that puts up finger, he shall have enough of his waies, saith the Lord. Must I stand for a stale, when he is aiming at other matters? must the great God wait on a simple Worm, till he can be at leisure to speak with him? shall the worst of evils be courted,

* *Videtur enim dedere* Deum, *sicuti si alicui homini loqueretur, & non attenderet ad ea quæ ipse proferret. Aquin.* 22 æ. q 83. art. 13.

courted, while the chief of goods is slighted, and yet even then pretend his service? As if some miserable Scullion at the Court had made great means to possess the King with his low condition, and when the King is come to speak with him, he lyes sweeping the sink, or scouring the spit, and there lets his Prince wait on him to no purpose; may not he justly say, when I come next to meet you, you'st know the difference between the Majesty of a King, and the sordidness of a Scullion *. Just so, poor soul, do thou and I, obtain leave to approach our heavenly Lord and King, and when he expects the heart earnestly to sollicit her great affairs, she is roving away, and bestowed in the Kitchin, or worse, while the great and holy God stands waiting to be gracious. What Father but would take it for a great indignity, to see his Son stopping his ears, or whistling, or playing with Flyes, while he is reading his last Will and Testament to him, or giving him order about his greatest affairs? And is not God greater than a Father? and can he with his honour, abate such a child his punishment, if he do not humbly cry him mercy, and study to offend no more?

Though

* *Divinum auxilium est implorandum non remisse, nec mente huc vel illuc evagante, ne quod talis non solum non impetrabit quod petit, sed etiam magis Deum irritabit.* Basil. Instit. ad rit. perfect.

Though divine vengeance be not alwaies so visible, as a Parents Rod, yet it is as real and more heavy. A poor man cannot escape, with his affronts of a great God.

SECT. VIII.

§. 8. Distractions hinder the benefit of Ordinances.

THE *third Effect* of Distractions, is, *That they hinder the benefits of an holy duty.* God seldom thinks of those prayers, that we think not of our selves, Isa. 64. 7. *And there is none that calleth on thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee:* The Lord counts such prayers as none at all, when a man doth not stir up himself to his business, *& non entis nulla est operatio* *. That which in God's account hath no being, can have no working. The benefits of Ordinances are many and great: they are like the *medium* to sensation, as the air to the eye, or ear; there is no seeing nor hearing without it: so are Ordinances to the soul: they are the Conduits to convey God's grace to us, and our desires to him: when a dirty distraction gets in, the Conduit is stopt,

* What is the reason that Christians are so much shadows rather than substance, when they come to forgive injuries, depend on God, &c. but because their service of God is more in shew, than in substance, according to that threatning, *Isa.* 29. 13, 14. Mr. *Argier* p. 188.

and

and the soul starved. And in this sense God's Name (which should be most sacred and dear to us) is most palpably taken in vain. When we use a great solemnity to no effect, *magno conatu nugas agimus.* The wind and tide to serve, and yet the soul to sleep; the Mariner to be at Dice or Cards, till the opportunity be lost, what a great evil is this, when our voyage is for life and death? If you could by the expence of one serious hour gain a *Lordship*, would you not be intense and earnest that hour? would you not fume at the company, that would divert you, and disdain any ordinary business that would interrupt you? O stay, and let me alone this hour, for I am busie. Now by the * cordial management of one serious hour in prayer, reading, hearing, or meditation; you may, shall infallibly gain at least one grain of grace, which is worth more than a Kingdom, yea, than a whole World. And is not that an evil thing, and bitter, that then interrupts you, and frustrates your gainful imployment, whereby it comes to pass that you get nothing? Pearls are dealing, and you get nothing. Orient graces in the hand of God, ready to give, and you none of them; who would entertain, that can be rid of such companions?

* *Hoc negotium plus gemitibus quam sermonibus agitur plus fletu quam affatu.* Bernard.

SECT. IX.

§. 9. Distractions deprive the soul of its comfort.

THE *fourth Effect* of these Distractions, is, *That they deprive the soul of its purest comforts.* The highest, truest, and purest joys and comforts, meet the soul in the service of God, Cant. 2. 3, 4. *I sate under his shadow with great delight.* (There are then delights, and great ones too in the waies of God) *And his fruit was sweet to my taste.* (If thou hast any spiritual taste, his fruit will be sweet to it.) *He brought me to the banquetting house:* God's house is his banquetting-house, and every Ordinance is a rare Feast to the soul, that doth spiritually manage it: Now these idle wandrings of the heart; first, by their *Disturbance*, then by their *Guilt*, do damp and deprive the soul of the comforts thereof. Just as a black cloud doth hide from you, the bright and warming beams of the Sun. How often have you mist of those joyes of the Holy Ghost, sweeter than the musick of the Spheres, by these vain thoughts? with what sweet content do you look back on a Duty, where communion hath been held between God and you? and what

what a folly is it to loſe an hour, and neither reap pleaſure nor profit by it*?

* Thy prayers will tire thee out,

for thou haſt only the difficult part of duty; thou crackeſt the ſhell, but eateſt not the kernel: like one that reads an excellent Book, whoſe ſenſe or language he underſtands not, which is a great trouble, whereas he that underſtands both, is much delighted. Mr. *White of Thoughts.*

There is fatneſs in God's houſe, and Rivers of pleaſures with him, but he ſhall have *leanneſs in his ſoul*, that gives way to theſe, and of all thoſe Rivers drinks not a drop, not one drop of true comfort and pleaſure. O what an Heaven do negligent ſinners loſe! how many gracious ſmiles, bleſſed tokens, cœleſtial raptures, the dainty Diet of Angels, and all through the idleneſs of the ſoul! Pſal. 63. 5. *My ſoul is ſatisfied as with marrow and fatneſs*, (I am full, brim full of joy and comfort, my heart runs over, and) *my mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful lips.* Now all theſe gleams of ſweet comfort and refreſhing, are ſtollen away by theſe thieviſh Diſtractions. For an upright heart, and an attentive, would ſeldom want the ſweet comforts, that uſually accompany ſincerity and ſeriouſneſs. He that can keep his meditations fixt on the right object, his

meditation ſhall be ſweet; and where ſhould the Lord make his Servants joyful, but in the houſe of prayer?

SECT. X.

§. 10. Diſtractions grieve away the Holy Ghoſt.

THE *fifth Effect* of Diſtractions in the Worſhip of God, is, *That they grieve away the Holy Ghoſt.* It is true what the bleſſed *Apoſtle* hath ſaid, Rom. 8. 26. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities*, and ſo helps againſt theſe, when they are but infirmities, mourn'd for, and ſtriven againſt, but when they are contracted habits, then they grieve and quench the holy Spirit*. The Greek word in that Scripture, ſignifies *to take and heave up a thing over againſt you*, to heave with you. I but now, if our ſpirits inſtead of helping, ſhrink away, and heave none, this promiſe will do us no good. If we leave the buſineſs wholly to God's Spirit, without our *diligent co-operation*, he will leave it to our ſpirits, without his *divine co-operation.* The Holy Ghoſt will dwell only with an holy heart, and theſe Idols in the heart, do heavily trouble that ſweet Spirit, Ezek. 14. 3. *Son of man, theſe men have*

* ἀντιλαμβάνεται.

have ſet up their Idols in their heart, and put the ſtumbling-block of their iniquity before their face, ſhould I be inquired of at all by them? Read on, and you'l ſee what conſequence this is of. What are worldly and ſinful diſtractions, but Idols in the heart? what are abuſed objects of the eye, or ear, but the ſtumbling-blocks of iniquity before the face? and how can the holy Spirit dwell in ſuch a ſoul, or abide ſuch doings? *Luther* ſomewhere ſayes, that the Holy Ghoſt dwells not in *Babel*, but in *Salem*; that is, delights not in the heart, where is nothing but confuſion, (that's the meaning of *Babel*) but in the heart where there is quiet, peace, and freedom, (that's the meaning of *Salem*) *In* Salem *alſo is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in* Sion, *Pſal.* 76. 2. The unkindneſs offered is very great: as if you ſhould earneſtly importune ſome noble friend, to accompany and help you in ſome arduous affair, and he comes to go with you, once and again: and ſtill, when you ſhould come along, and promote your own buſineſs, you ſteal away about ſome trivial matters, and leave your noble friend in the lurch: This is the very caſe, you humbly importune the holy Spirit of God,

to help you in the ſervice of God; and he moſt graciouſly comes to help you, but one diſtraction or other charms away your heart, and the Holy Ghoſt is left alone. And thus the Holy Ghoſt is ſo oft ſinned *againſt*, till at length he is ſinned *away*. And thus you ſee the evil of Diſtractions, which is the *ſeventh Point* to be handled.

CHAP. VIII.

The Cure of Diſtractions.

Cap. 8. The Cure of Diſtractions.

SECT. I.

§. 1. AND if there be ſuch great evil in theſe Diſtractions, and evil effects of them, what ſhall *an upright heart* do to be rid of them? I ſay, *an upright heart*, that inquires for means, to uſe them, and craves a plaiſter not to look at, but to apply to his ſore. And art thou thus reſolved, that readeſt theſe lines? For us to ſpend our ſkill, and you your time, without full purpoſe to practiſe, is labour in vain: Nay, it will harden your hearts here, and increaſe

creaſe your condemnation hereafter. You will deceive your ſelves, and diſappoint us, if you reſt in hearing, without doing what you hear. Well then, are you reſolved unfeignedly to take the Lord's counſel, for the deſtruction of your diſtractions? Stop a little and reſolve——— And now let me put that queſtion to you, Jer. 30. 21. *Who is this that hath ingaged his heart, to approach unto me, ſaith the Lord?* Who is this? who will do it? who is thus well adviſed? that hath *ingaged*, not only made a proffer, but *ingaged*, and that *his heart*, to approach unto God, and where in this Congregation doth that man ſit, or ſtand, that out of a deep ſenſe of the hatefulneſs and hurtfulneſs of this ſin, doth now ingage his heart and ſoul to uſe all means againſt it, and that in the uprightneſs of his heart? The Lord your God ſees who yields and cries out, *Through grace I am reſolved.* Well, on that condition I proceed to Direction.

I. *Diſpel the Cauſes fore-mentioned*, and uſe the Remedies preſcribed againſt them; and here if you be in good earneſt, you will look back and review them, and the helps adjoyned, and beg of God, as you read them, *In this Lord pardon and help thy Servant!*

I. Uſe the Remedies againſt the fore-mentioned Cauſes.

vant! A man of ſmall ſkill, may eaſily ſtop the ſymptomes of diſeaſes, as the preſent pain in the teeth, or the like; but he is an Artiſt, that removes the cauſes of them; and it is more eaſie to turn off two or three of theſe vain thoughts, than to heal the ſoul of the *Thought evil* in the cauſes thereof. If theſe remain Atheiſm, unpreparedneſs, lukewarmneſs, worldlineſs, and the like in the heart, all the rules and receits under Heaven, will never cure you of Diſtractions. For there will ſtill ſpring up continual ſupplies from theſe corrupt cauſes; as the lopping of the boughs will ſtill have new ſprouts coming, untill the root be ſtocked up; and therefore with faithfulneſs, and reſolution, ſet upon all thoſe Remedies that have been preſcribed. Beg of God to dry up the ſpring, elſe your damming up the ſtreams will do no good. When the cauſes are diſpelled, the cure is wrought.

And here is a plain diſcovery of an Hypocrite in heart; if ſome light eaſie receit will help him in any caſe, he may ſet to it; but if he muſt go about, and take pains; if the way of cure be any whit intricate, or difficult, then he throws it up, never will go to the bottom of his buſineſs:

Whereas

Whereas the upright heart doth but deſire to know what to do, what is God's method and way, and then long, or ſhort, hard, or eaſie, he never diſputes, he demurrs not, but falls to work; he knows every inch he goes, he gets advantage, and *IN keeping of God's Commandments, there is great reward.* The ſpeedineſs of his cure he deſires, but the ſoundneſs of it he inſiſts on, and counts no *trouble* in the *cure*, like the *evil* of his *ſin*. Are you reſolv'd in this? elſe 'tis to no purpoſe to proceed? To ſtumble at the threſhold, preſages. But if we be clear thus far, I proceed.

SECT. II.

§. 2. II. Bewail former failings herein.

II. *BEwail your former failings in this reſpect*; this will divers wayes conduce to your amendment:

1. *Morally*, being *an Argument* that you really diſlike the ſin, and *the condition* of God's pardon thereof. The ordinary *Lord have mercy*, doth herein fall ſhort of pardon, becauſe it is not ſpoke in tears; If God did but ſee a man grieve for his ſin*, a

* No man was ever kept out of Heaven for his confeſſed badneſs, but many have for their ſuppoſed goodneſs. Mr. *Capell.*

little

little ado, a few words ſhould get forgiveneſs. The Publican had but a ſhort *peccavi*, nor *David* upon his dreadfull fall; but they were words that were felt, they were heart-deep, they ſwum in tears, each word fetcht a drop of blood from the heart. And God was well pleaſed with them in Chriſt. When *Antipater* had written a large Letter to *Alexander*, againſt his Mother *Olympia*, his anſwer was, doſt thou not know, that one tear from my Mother's eye, can waſh away all her faults? ſo one penitential tear from a believers eye, can perſwade much with God in Chriſt for the pardon of his wandrings. But the moſt imbroidered phraſes, without this Chriſtian grief, work not with God at all. *Lachrymarum lingua diſertiſſimè loquitur* —— If Chriſt Jeſus himſelf did ſue for pardon for an impenitent ſinner, he would not be heard. But when your conſcience is toucht, and the heart melts, and bleeds for your faults herein; now, ſaith God, I ſee yonder man cannot live with a wandring heart, and therefore he ſhall live without it. I'le never ſee him drown'd in his diſtractions, that is thus drowned in tears about them; if he really *diſlike* them, I'le really *diſpel* them.

And

And then again, till their guilt be pardon'd, our hearts are uſually deſperate; like a wicked ſpend-thrift, while hopeleſs of a diſcharge from all, treaſures up ſin unto ſin, till that dreadful pay-day come, the day of Judgement. Whereas, when ſin, this ſin is truly grieved for, the Holy Ghoſt doth ever bring a pardon in one hand, and a plaiſter in another; at the ſame time, to clear the guilt, and cure the diſeaſe *. O, ſaies the ſoul, I am defiled, I am wounded in my flight to Heaven, I am diſappointed in my affairs, my God is angry. I have ſinned juſt then, when I ſhould have ſcored out my ſins. I have ſinned againſt my remedy, and how ſhall I be cured? O was there ever ſuch a rotten backſliding heart! ſuch a *Cain*-like vagabond curſed frame? what place but Hell, is fit for that heart, that cannot reſt in Heaven? Ah Lord! I wonder that the end of my prayer, is not the beginning of my puniſhment. Though theſe be but ſmall

* The curious Pen-man having (trimm'd his Page,
(dabbled Quill,
With the dead language of his (a rage
Lets fall an heedleſs drop, then in (skill:
Caſhieres the fruit of his unlucky (ſant bud
Even ſo my pregnant ſoul in th' in-(coal-black flood
Of her beſt thoughts ſhowres down a good.
Of unadviſed Ills, and cancels all his
Mr. *Quarles.*

ſmall like the Sand, yet being many as the Sand, how can I ſtand under them? I am aſhamed, yea even confounded for theſe reproaches of my duties. Nay, then ſaies God, that hearkens behind the curtains all this while, *Is* Ephraim *my dear Son? is not he a pleaſant child? I will remember him*, I will have mercy upon him. When thou art ripe for Hell in thy own eyes, then art thou ripe for grace and glory in the eyes of God. No man ſhall ever be overborn with a ſin he hates. Go my bleſſed Spirit, that haſt melted him, and mend him; that haſt ſoftned him, ſtrengthen him: he that laments his ſin, ſhall never languiſh under it*. The ſacrifice of a *broken heart* doth pleaſe him, though the ſacrifice of a *broken Chriſt* alone doth ſatisfie him.

* To weep for fear, is childiſh; to weep for anger, is womaniſh, to weep for grief, is humane, to weep for compaſſion, is divine, but to weep for ſin, is Chriſtian. B. *Hall.*

2. *Diſpoſitively*, grief at heart doth help forward the cure of diſtractions, and that by ſoftening the heart, and ſo fitting the ſame for the impreſſions of God's will. When the Wax is melted, you may turn and mold it, which way you will: So when the ſoul is melted by grief for theſe ſins, God

God Almighty may eaſily be heard, and his counſel will be taken. And alſo this godly ſorrow (as was before obſerved) doth ſo afflict and make a mans heart to ake and ſmart, that he will take ſome pains to prevent the like anguiſh again. When they knock at door, you'l ſay, O theſe are they, that coſt me dear at ſuch a time: *non emam tanti pœnitere.* I feel yet the ſad impreſſions of my late affliction for them: I found a pardon no eaſie enterprize, nor Repentance ſo pleaſing a potion to brew for it again. I would not for all the world, (much leſs for one vain thought or two) nor for a thouſand worlds together, be under that anger of God, nor feel one drop of his ſcalding indignation, which I have perceived for theſe offences. O Sirs, where godly ſorrow is in the power of it, what carefulneſs doth it work? what zeal, what indignation, yea what revenge? It makes ſin lye like a Mountain upon the ſoul, muſters up all the aggravations of ſin, and ſets them home on the heart. O to ſin in an Ordinance! againſt ſuch a God! in the midſt of my greateſt buſineſs! after ſuch conviction! vows and promiſes of exactneſs before him! To offend both Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt at a clap!

heart

heart of ſtone, doſt not melt? yea to offend the *Angels of Heaven*, which holy ſpirits turn away their faces at our vanities in the Aſſemblies; yea and offend the *Angels upon Earth* (God's Miniſters) while that which coſt them moſt ſerious pains, is ſpoken to the air! to wound my own ſoul in the act of curing it, and increaſe guilt, when I am getting it cleared! to play the Hypocrite before the face of God, the Judge of Heaven and Earth! O wretched man that I am! O my ſin is exceeding ſinful! lend a tear, O rend an heart! O thou moſt high! *A broken heart to day, will be a good preſervative againſt a wandring heart to morrow.*

SECT. III.

§. 3. III. Engage the aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt.

III. *Engage the holy Spirit of God in thine aſſiſtance*, Joh. 15. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* Supernatural work cannot be done, without ſupernatural help: You may and ought to do what *a man* can do, that is, compoſe your ſelves, and guard your ſenſes, but you cannot do that which only *a God* can do, that is, fly up, and fix your hearts in Heaven, *Rom.* 8. 26.

We

We cannot pray for any thing [for matter] *as we ought*, [for the manner] *but the Spirit it ſelf maketh interceſſion for us.* The Greek word ſignifies, the Spirit *over and above* ſteps in and helps; or, as *others*, makes vehement interceſſion for us. We climb up the Ladder as well as we can towards Heaven, but alas it wavers, no ſtability till the Holy Ghoſt hold it at the top, and draw, and lift us up, and then we get a ſight of Heaven. And you have reſolved, belike, and been ſecure of a good frame, but Prov. 28. 26. *He that truſteth in his own heart, is a fool*; you have found no fixedneſs or livelineſs in your ſpirits without the aſſiſtance of God: He that prayes aright, muſt *pray in the Holy Ghoſt*, Jude v. 20. This alſo quickens and heats the ſoul, whereby there is no room, or leiſure for diſtracted thoughts.

Hereby the ſoul is carried ſtreight up to God, and ſtaies at nothing on this ſide Heaven; yea, by the Spirit's bleſſed aſſiſtance, *Every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt.* O bleſſed frame! when every thought is captivated to obey Chriſt; there is none can deal with our ſpirits, but the Spirit of God. When the *Word* comes in the hand of the Spirit,

Spirit, there is no avoiding it. Then the reading one *Chapter* can convert, as that *Joh.* 1. did the learned *Junius*: yea, of one *verse*, as that 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. did Mr. *Bilney*; yea, one sentence can comfort the heart, as that, *Isa.* 57. 15. did the afflicted conscience of one, that nothing else could satisfie; thereby the soul is carryed up, as Mr. *Tilleman* the Martyr was in his devotions, so that he saw or heard no body, till after long search, and great noise, his persecutors took him up from his knees. The heart is so carryed upward to God, that all the world looks as inconsiderable, as a mote or atome at that time, and not worth the thinking on: And is entertained with that sweet content, that it cannot wish to be any where else; and therefore a by-thought is as unwelcome, as base company to him that is busie with Nobles.

Beg therefore of God, with earnest importunity, at the entrance of every Ordinance, for his holy Spirit; and he hath said, Luk. 11. 13. *He will give his Spirit to them that ask him.* Say, Lord, if thy Spirit go not with me, let me go no further. For as the *Intercession of Christ* is absolutely necessary for your acceptance, so the

Intercession

Intercession of the Holy Ghost, is necessary for your assistance. The Spirit it self also making intercession for us with sighs, that cannot be uttered. Promise your heavenly Father, that you will never willingly disoblige or grieve away his Spirit again. Art thou dead? cry, *Quicken me*, and *I will call upon thy Name*. Is thy heart roving? cry, *Unite my heart to fear thy Name*. Humbly plead his promise, that he will put his Spirit and *fear into your hearts, that you shall never* (and if never, then not in his solemn Ordinance) *depart from him*; and observe the gracious gales of the Spirit, and when they clash not with the Rules of his holy Word, lay hold on them, and fall to duty. It's best rowing below, when the wind blows fair above. When thy heart is warm and in ure, then do thy business throughly. And beware of grieving him between times; let there be a coherence between prayer and practice: let your whole life be of a piece, lest he withdraw when you have most need of him. And remember that to *grief the Spirit* oft, is the way to *quench the Spirit*, and to quench the Spirit oft, is the way to do *despite to the Spirit*. That is a rare expression, Gal. 5. 25. *If ye live in*

the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit: how far is this phrase from vulgar apprehension or feeling! To live and walk by the conduct and quickening of the Holy Ghost. this is the life of a Saint. And then he that walks in the Spirit, prays also *in the Spirit*, and *watches thereunto*, Ephes. 6. 18. Whereby those airy darts of the Devil, that would conquer the strength of a man, are crush'd and chas'd away by the strength of a God.

SECT. IV.

§. 4. IV. Believe the Presence of God.

IV. *Believe the Presence of God.* The eye of the Master, makes the Scholar busie. If his eye be off the Scholar, the Scholar's eye is off his book, Psal. 16. 8. *I have set the Lord alwaies before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved:* Else your hearts will be moved, and removed too upon every motion. And therefore Faith, which doth realize invisible things, and presentiate an invisible God, is of great use in every holy duty, Heb. 11. 6. *He that cometh to God, must believe that God is.* He must as fully believe that God is present,

as

as if he were visible *, that thou art incompassed and involved in the presence of God. If thou go forward, he is there; if backward, thou mayest perceive him; on the left hand, there he doth work, though thou canst not behold him; he hides himself on the right hand, that thou canst not see him: *Yet he knoweth the way that thou takest*, Job 23,9.10. This is his common presence: but then in an Ordinance, there he is in the *midst* of his people; there he looks over Heaven and Earth as nothing, and to this man looks he, that's poor, and contrite, and trembles at his Word: and therefore, when you pray, you must not only speak, as speaking *of God, but to God.* It's slighting a Prince, when we deliver a Petition, and look another way; we bid our children look at us, when they speak to us, and so should we at God, who is not far from every one of us in his Ordinances. There he is with his Host about him; and though 'tis above us to * determine whether his Angels are imployed to conduct his Word to us, or our Prayers to him; yet its certain, that they attend the great

* *Intende igitur ill', qui intendit tibi— super singula verba divinæ Scripturæ diligenter intendas.* Bern. Med. c. 6.

* *Offerunt sancti Angeli Dei (i.e. preces Sanctorum) non quasi nesciatis qui omnia novit, antequam fiant, sed ut testes efficiantur Sanctitatis & pietatis justorum.* Origen. *Sollicit' discurrunt (viz. Angeli) medii inter nos & Deum & nostros gemitus fidelissimè ad eum portant.* Bern. ibid.

Jehovah, and never more willing, than in an Ordinance; being transported with joy at a sinners conversion, and most pleasantly feasting on our pœnitential tears.

* Remember, there is above thee an hearing ear, a seeing eye, and a Register-book, wherein all thy thoughts, words, and actions, are written, and thou shalt not do amiss. *A Rabbin* to his Scholar.

* It's true, God is alwaies, and every where with thee, with those more common Attributes of Immensity, Power, and Providence; but in his Worship, there he is also present by his grace, mercy, holiness, and efficacy. His common presence may be compared to the Sun in a cloudy day; it is in the Sky, we have great benefit by it, we should die without it: but his special Ordinance Presence, is like the Sun breaking out of a cloud in a Summers morning, that discovers atomes, warms our bodies, and refresheth our spirits. Even so the common presence of God upholds the world, in him we live, move, and have our Being, and the belief that *God is every where, should perswade us to sin no where* *. But now the special presence of God in his Worship, that like the Sun breaking out, inlightens the mind, warms the heart, and melts the most rocky soul. Hereby God doth, as it were, shine directly upon us; so that to trifle or sin before him, is a crime intolerable. The name of every place, where God is rightly worshipped,

* *Sic vive cum hominibus, quasi Deus videat: sic loquere cum Deo, quasi homines audiant.* Seneca.

ſhipped, is, *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there. Thy cloſet, *the Lord is there* between thy chair and thee, and canſt thou ſhift from him? thy bed-chamber, *the Lord is there* between thy bed-ſide and thee, and canſt thou turn from him? by the fire-ſide with thy family, the name of that place is *Jehovah Shammah*, and wilt thou ſleep? In the Aſſembly, *the Lord is there*, and what are all the Gallants there, in compariſon of him? O therefore hear and look at God, and pray and look at God, meditate and look at God, ſing Pſalms, and ſtill look at God. It was *Hagar's* ſaying, Gen. 16. 13. *Have I alſo here looked after him, that ſeeth me? And ſhe called the Name of the Lord that ſpake to her, Thou God ſeeſt me.* O call the Name of the Lord that ſpeaks to thee, and the Lord to whom thou ſpeakeſt, Thou God ſeeſt me*. Keep thy eye upon him, as he keep his eye upon thee; find a fairer object, and gaze and ſpare not; but while there is none in Heaven or Earth deſirable like him, let nothing in Heaven or Earth diſtract thee from him. The lively ſenſe

* God looks not at the Oratory of your prayers, how elegant they be, nor at the Geometry of your prayers, how long they be, nor at the Arithmetick of your prayers, how many they be, nor at the Logick of your prayers, how methodical they be, but the ſincerity of them he looks at. Mr. *Brooks.*

of this, will charm the heart exceedingly, and we ſteal from duty, becauſe we ſee no One there. It's ſaid, Prov. 20. 8. *A King that ſitteth in the Throne of Judgement, ſcattereth away all evil with his eyes*; that is, his very countenance ſhould read ſuch a Lecture of Juſtice, Temperance, Chaſtity, and Piety, that every ſpectator ſhould fear to do otherwiſe. O then how ſhould the preſence of God ſo inchant the ſoul with that holineſs, goodneſs, and ſweetneſs therein, that not one thought could be ſpared from ſo lovely an object!

The full and clear viſion, and fruition of this preſence of God, doth ſo eternally raviſh and content the ſoul in Heaven, that they would not look off the face of God for a thouſand worlds; no, though all the Kings of the Earth in their greateſt triumph, ſhould paſs by Heaven gates, and the Earth's utmoſt glory with them: A glorified ſoul is ſo full of the preſence of God, that it would not ſpare one minutes look to ſee it all. It is ſaid of one *Theodorus*, a Martyr, that in all his tortures he ſmiled, and being aſkt his reaſon, anſwered, that he ſaw a glorious youth wiping the ſweat off his face, whereby he was infinitely refreſhed. If thou couldeſt but ſee by

by the eye of Faith, the blessed face of God smiling on thee, and with the handkerchief of his love wiping thy sweat and tears away, thy heart would be glad, and thy glory rejoyce, and thou would'st say, Lord, it's good, yea, it's best for me to be here. Go not willingly from him, without a sight of him: *Moses* had few distractions when he saw God face to face. The actual faith of a Saint ingages the actual presence of God. *Drexelius* tells us of a vision of an holy man, and behold in the Temple, an Angel at every man's elbow, that was at prayer: He that prayed with malice in his heart, his Angel wrote his petitions in Gall; he that prayed coldly, his prayers were written in the water; he that prayed with distractions, his suits were written in sand; and he that prayed in faith, his Angel wrote his petitions in Letters of Gold *. The moral whereof at least is good: If thou would'st believe that every word spoken by thee, or to thee, is written, with what care and conscience would'st thou pray and hear? And be sure, there is one among

* Ἐστήκασιν οἱ ἀπογραφόμενοι τὰ ῥήματα ἄγγελοι, &c. *Stant illic Angeli, qui quæ emittuntur verba excipiunt & perscribunt. Adest Dominus qui introeuntium speculatur effectus.* Basil. conc. 9. de Oratione.

you, that takes notes of all, who will give to every man according to his works, whom to see and feel in an Ordinance, will quit you from Distractions.

SECT. V.

§. 5. V. Lay a Law upon your senses.

V. *LAY a Law upon your senses.* Beg of God to sanctifie them; as they are all Pensioners to Satan by nature and complotment, so bring them all into Covenant with God, that ye may be sanctified in soul, and body, and spirit. Give them to him, use them for him. It is said, Prov. 17. 24. *The fools eyes are in the ends of the Earth.* Any new face that comes in any antick garb, any noise about, every head that moves, every leaf that stirs, commands the eyes and heart of a fool, but that while, Prov. 4. 25. *Let thy eyes look straight on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.* Compose thy eyes in that devout and heavenly posture, that whatever falls out, thou mayest *hoc agere*, keep to thy business without wavering. For the heart is used *to walk after the eye*, Job 31. 7. To the undoing of the soul.

It is a precept among the *Rabbins*, that

if a Jew be at prayer, though a Serpent come and bite him, yet he must not stir, till he hath done his duty. Satan that old Serpent will be nibling at thy heel with one vain suggestion or other, but go thou through with thy business, and let God alone with him.

In Prayer then, fix thy *eyes* Heavenward*, and let nothing divert them, till the prayer be done. This will shew that thou would'st lift thy heart thither, if thou could'st, and will prevent many an impertinent distraction, that comes in by the eye. If any deride thee for this, doubt thou not of good company, Psal. 123. 1. *Unto thee do I lift up my eyes, O thou that dwellest in the Heavens.* Let your *ears* be as good as stopt, to every thing, besides your work. And the lifting up your craving *hands*, will not be unprofitable to this end; for you will find them to flagg, when the heart knocks off from its business, whereby you may be advertised to come in again, Lam. 3. 41. *Let us lift up our hearts WITH OUR HANDS unto God in the Heavens.* And let your prayers be *vocal*, if it may be, for the voice both helps to fix the thoughts, and raise the affections, the want whereof we discern in meditation.

* *Illuc aspiciantes Christiani, manibus expansis quia innocuis, capite nudo quia non erubescimus, denique sine monitore quia ex pectore.* Tertul. Apolog. p. 30.

In

In hearing of God's Word, let the *eye* be chained to the Preacher with the greateſt attention and reverence; as if you ſaw an Angel in the Pulpit, or Chriſt himſelf. And beware, leſt your needleſs complements to men, be interpreted a neglect to God. 'Tis ſmall manners to be complementing the Kings Servants in his Preſence chamber, till you have done your homage to the King. Do your work with God, 'tis time enough to perform your civilities to men, when that is done. Look then to God, from him is thy expectation, with him is thy buſineſs, Luk. 4. 20. *The eyes of all them that were in the Synagogue, were FASTNED on him.* And therein alſo, let your *ears* be only open Heaven-ward. Lord! to deal with thee I am come, and thou ſhalt have all, my ſoul, and body, and all.

And here I cannot but digreſs a little, but it is to cure a more criminal digreſſion, which is that frequent *Abuſe* of *Whiſpering* and talking to one another, in the ſervice of God, which except it be upon ſuch inſtant *indiſpenſable* buſineſs, as cannot be ordered before or after the Ordinance, is a ſin in an high degree, and that

1. Becauſe it brings a *guilt and diſtraction upon*

upon two at once. If a vain thought there be so evil, as you have heard, how criminal then is this, that involves you both, yea perhaps occasions a distraction to twenty more, that observe you? And the guilt of all their vain thoughts on that occasion will be charged on your account, according to the equity of that Law, *Exod.* 21. 23.

2. Because this hath more of *Affront* in it. Thy heart testifies to God's face, that thou dost despise his presence. Who but an impudent *Renegade* would, while the King is laying down terms of mercy and honour to him, be talking and laughing with his companions at some uncouth Courtier that comes in? and who but an implicit Atheist shall be whispering with his neighbour about any thing, while the King of Heaven and Earth is treating with him about Eternity? You hold it no piece of good manners, while any man is speaking to you, especially if he be your superiour, to neglect him so far, as to turn from him to discourse another; nay, if the most necessary business call you away, you apologize for your diversion, and crave pardon: And shall you dare while your Maker is in conference with you, to confront

front him with an open parle with others? This is an high affront, if you consider it well.

3. This hath more *offence* in it. An offence to the Preacher, that hath taken much pains to prepare that, which you will not take pains to hear, or else imply, it is not worth the hearing. An offence to the Congregation that sees it, who must needs, if they fear God, be troubled at so publick a fault. An offence to the Angels, that, while they stoop down to look into the Mysteries opened in the Church, see you slight them so notoriously: An offence to your own souls, that perhaps in that moment miss of what would most have done them good. O therefore, Christian Reader! mourn for thy misbehaviour this way, and amend it for time to come, lest God refuse to treat with thee, that trifleſt thus in thy treating with him. Remember, it's work enough for a *poor man*, to converse with a *great God*. He needs no other business, to fill his hands.

And then *in Meditation* you must also compose your senses. There shut your *eye*, and *ear*, and sequester your self wholly to the contemplation of things invisible.

ſible. The leaſt ſight or ſound will here diſtract: Any thing, yea nothing will throw us off the hinges in this duty; indeed it is ſaid of *Iſaac*, Gen. 24. 63. *That he went forth in the field in the evening-tide to meditate.* And in that kind of meditation, where the riſe and ſubject matter is ſenſible, there the ſenſes muſt be active and buſie; but I think, in other caſes, the outward ſenſes may ſtand aſide, and let the ſoul alone without them: we are never more ſenſible, than when we uſe no outward ſenſe at all.

And laſtly, *in communicating* at the Lord's-table, there fix both your eyes on the ſacred elements, untill the eye have affected the heart to feel what Chriſt felt, to die in his death, and *looking* on him whom you have pierced, you mourn for him with a ſuperlative ſorrow: And then look at thoſe ſacred ſigns with an eye of Faith, till virtue come from that brazen Serpent, to cure your ſin-ſtung ſoul. Look yet again, till thy heart be inflamed with love to him, till he cry in Heaven, Cant. 4. 9. *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my Siſter, my Love, thou haſt raviſhed my heart with one of thy eyes, with one chain about thy neck.* He that ſpends his eye there to

to observe his neighbours, to criticize upon their gestures, hath little to do, and less to get in that sacred Ordinance. And then lay a Law upon thine ear, and taste, and touch, for most of the senses are gratified and useful in this Ordinance; that nothing may interrupt thy communion with Jesus Christ at that time. For there the utmost strength of body and soul are scarce enough, to gain, and feel, and do; what is there to be gain'd, and felt, and done.

And in general, be not treacherous to your selves. Satan *without you* can do no great matters *within you*: your senses you can command, you hearts not so well. Be faithful in what ye can, else if you could order your very hearts, you would not. He that will not do what he can, would much less do, what he cannot.

SECT. VI.

§. 6. VI. Reflection and Ejaculation.

VI. THE sixth Cure of these Distractions, is, a watchful *reflection of the soul* upon its self, *and ejaculation* unto God, It is said, Eccles. 10. 2. *A wise mans heart is at his right hand, but a fools heart*

heart is at his left. Is not this the meaning of it? That a wiſe good man hath his heart ready, can ſpeedily ſerve him, inſtantly recoil upon himſelf; but a wicked fooliſh man, his heart is aukward and unſkilful, a left-hand-heart, unweildy and unready for any good work. O get then a dextrouſneſs of heart to bolt in, and break the ſinful knot of your vain imaginations *. That a diſtraction may not ſit ſo long on the heart, that it hatch, and breed yet more of the kind, and ſo ſwallow you up in condemnation. It is ſaid, Gen. 15. 11. *When the Fowls light*, Abraham *drove them away*, not when they were ſitting or feeding upon the carkaſſes, but as ſoon as ever they lighted, we muſt not give place to theſe for a moment. Mr. *Dod* adviſeth us to aſk our ſelves often theſe two queſtions. 1. *What am I?* 2. *What am I doing?* We are well, if we can well anſwer theſe two queſtions. If thou canſt anſwer, *I am a child of God*, and *I am doing God's Will*, it will ſtand thee in more ſtead than if thou could'ſt anſwer all the queſtions in *Aquinas*. We read, *Nehem.* 4. 17. That in the building of God's houſe, *every one, with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon:*

* *Quacunque horâ mala cogitatio venerit, expelle eam; quam cito apparuerit ſcorpio, contere caput ejus, ibi emenda culpam, ubi naſcitur, viz. in corde.* Bern. *de modo bene vivendi.* Serm. 29.

weapon: Work and watch, work and fight was the guiſe of them. And he that will edifie in God's houſe yet, muſt do the ſame; hear and watch, and watch and pray, and fight, and ſtruggle, and pray ſtill. This Hill we climb inch by inch: One may tumble into Hell, but the ſtrait gate muſt be ſtriven at. Let conſcience then perform it's part, and ſpeedily glance into the heart with all fidelity. *Abraham's* Fowls came without ſending for, and yet would not go away without driving. You cannot hinder a Thief from coming by the houſe, but you may from quartering with you, at leaſt with any quiet and approbation.

And it is good to caſt off theſe wandring thoughts with *an Ejaculation* to God*, elſe the deſtruction of one, will prove the generation of another. When Satan caſts in his *injaculations*, lift you up your *ejaculations*. This will ingage divine ſtrength, and work God your friend. Do as they, *Act.* 19.34. When they thought *Alexander* would ſpeak evil of *Diana, they cryed, Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians. So when theſe are injected, then breath forth into ſome heavenly ejaculations,

* *Ideo Sacerdos ante Orationem prefatione præmiſſa parat fratrum mentes dicendo, ſurſum corda, & reſpondet Plebs, habemus ad Dominum, admoneatur* Dom. *nihil aliud ſe quam Dominum cogitare debere.* Cyprian. de Orat.

ejaculations, so will you cross the tempter, and instead of losing, gain *. Send up thy prayer in a *Parenthesis*, like that, Psal. 119. 34. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way.—Forsake me not, O God, my strength——— And take not thy Holy Spirit from me——— Awake O North wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden.* These darting desires sent up with faith, will weaken the habits of corruption, and affright Satan from his suggestions. This resisting the Devil will make him flee from you: As the golden spikes were set on the Temple to keep the Fowls from thence; so will these, being conscionably used, keep off vain thoughts from lodging upon your sacrifices. Up therefore and stir up thy self, by this means to save thy sacrifice from being devoured, and thy soul polluted. Alas, we are daily told, and we feel it, that the heart is deceitful above all things; if a wary eye be not kept over it, you will find it sometimes in the bed of lust, sometimes on the pinacle of honour, and often digging in the world, and yet salve up all with an *I thank God, I am not as other hearts are.* If ever you be rid of these guests, you must do, as good *Barnabas* advised them,

* Cry unto God, Lord, wilt thou suffer thy slave to abuse thy child before thy face, while he is on his knees for a blessing. Dr. *Harrison.*

with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord, Act. 11. 23. There must be heart, purpose of heart, full purpose of heart, and then you will cleave unto the Lord.

Obj. But I am suddenly slipt from God, before I am aware *, and when I see it, and resolve anew, yet ere five sentences be past, I am gone again.

* Neh. 4. 11. And our Adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them—— and cause the work to cease. Thus Satan——

Answ. This shews the sad corruption of our nature, and should therefore humble us: And this argues also the contracted ill disposition of the soul: when a disease hath such recidivations and returns, it speaks that it is too much radicated, yet in this case you must not give out, nor throw down your watch; you must not compound with sin, because it's hard to sue out an *ejectionem firmâ*, no peace must be made with *Amalek* for ever: If the Devil and your unregenerate part be unwearied in their assault against you, you must be unwearied in your resistance, and die *se defendendo*. And you will find, as use and custom hath strengthened these temptations, so an use of reflection and strenuous opposition, will at length weaken, and at last extinguish them.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

VII. THE laſt and great cure of diſtractions, is, *ſtrength of grace.* As no props without will keep the ſhip ſteady, except there be ſtore of ballaſt within; ſo no extrinſick helps will ſtabliſh your hearts againſt theſe wandrings without grace, yea ſtrong grace within, Heb. 13. 19. *It is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed with grace.* For, §. 7. VII. Strength of grace.

1. The more ſanctifying grace you have, the *more mortified* will your heart be unto the world, and the fleſh, the great diſturbers of divine ſervice. The faireſt Landſkip ſhewed to a dead man, moves him not at all. A heart dead to the world, is not removed from God with every trifle of the world, 2 Cor. 4. 18. *While we look not at things that are ſeen, but at things that are not ſeen.* Things viſible are not worth looking at, eſpecially when things inviſible are in place. What's a temporal houſe, or land, or children to me, that ſee, and am contracting for an eternal and glorious houſe and ſtate? Alas! what taſte is there in theſe rotten things?

2. The more grace, *the clearer* will be

your eye of faith, to behold the Majesty of God * with whom you have to do, and the reality of the things about which you treat; for *faith is the evidence of things not seen*, and makes the soul as real as the body, and Heaven as real as the world, and the day of Judgement as real as the present day: And how undistractedly would a man pray, that saw the world on a flame, or himself dropping into another world?

* *Psal.* 48. 9. We have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of thy Temple. These are the thoughts of such as see by the eye of faith.

3. The more grace, the *tenderer* will be *your conscience*; and so sooner smart, and more oppose these enormities; the tender eye cannot bear, what the brawny hand can. A distraction in a duty more troubles a tender conscience, than the total omission of it doth another. A little sin, is no little sin, where there is a great deal of grace. O keep your conscience tender, with all the care and skill you can. A little wedge makes way for a greater, and a little thief can let a greater in. Blessed is the man that feareth alway, and *he that hath a soft heart, is alwayes hard to sin.*

4. The more grace, the *more affection* to things above, Col. 3. 2. *Set your affections on things above*, and where there is much affection, there is little distraction. A heavenly mind is all in all, *Isa.* 26. 8, 9.

Wher

When the deſire of the ſoul is to the remembrance of God when with thy ſoul thou haſt deſired him in the night, then *with thy ſpirit within thee*, thou wilt ſeek him early *. He that hath his uſual converſation in Heaven, will not eaſily have his heart from thence in prayer. It's a clear caſe, where the treaſure is, there will the heart be alſo. A mind above, will not ſo eaſily have thoughts below. Where is that man that can ſay, Pſal. 119. 20. *My ſoul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy Judgements at all times.* He whoſe heart breaks for the preſence of God, will break his heart, when he ſlips from him: And he that cryes, O when ſhall I come and appear before God? will not privately wiſh, when ſhall I have done, and take leave of him?

* If a man have ſtore of gold and ſilver in his pocket, and but a few farthings, he will bring out gold more readily than farthings; ſo when there is much grace, much of Heaven in the ſoul, your thoughts will ſavour of that. Mr. *Gibbet* of prayer. p. 405.

5. The more grace, the *more diſpoſed frame will the heart be in*, for the ſervice of God: And it is indiſpoſition to an Ordinance, that lets in diſtractions there; as an inſtrument out of tune, hath divers jarring ſtrings, and ſtill one or other ſlips, and ſpoils the melody: a diſtraction is a ſtring ſlipt, that ſpoils the muſick, a tuned and diſpoſed heart would prevent it much. The flock of ſheep that's indiſpoſed and

unwilling to drive, ſtart out of the way into every Lanes end; one this way, and another that; and juſt ſo is it with an unwilling heart, one thought ſtarts this way, another that, and it's a piece of ſkill to drive them through. O but a willing heart, an heart prepared and ready to every good work, it flies up quite an end, and delights its ſelf in the Lord, *The Law of God is in his heart, none of his ſteps then ſhall ſlide*, Pſal. 37. 31.

6. The more grace, the *more ſpiritual* and inviſible *ſins are obſerved* and reſiſted. Small grace diſcerns and mortifies the filthineſs of the fleſh; but ſtrong grace ſees and hates the filthineſs of the ſpirit, and ſo perfects holineſs in the fear of God. Groſs ſins are left at firſt, but more refined ſins, ſpiritual wickedneſs in heavenly imployments, theſe are work for riper graces afterwards. Hence the ſtrong Chriſtian uſually with eaſe, can avoid oppreſſion, cruelty, uncleanneſs, drunkenneſs, and the like; but the weak Chriſtian hardly conquers ſpiritual pride, paſſion, unbelief, diſtractions, and ſuch like; a little mote more troubles the eye, than much dirt moleſts the hand; ſo an holy tender heart is more troubled with theſe undiſcerned ſins, than another man with greater crimes.

7. The

7. The more grace, *the ſtronger reſolutions* you will put on againſt them, and reſolution breaks the heart of them. The poor Country-man going to his Market; at every door in town almoſt, there is a ſnare laid for him; here one calls him in, and there another: but he reſolved in the morning, not to ſpend a penny, and thereby he breaks through and avoids them all: Alas! his whole weeks earning had gone at a clap, and he ſhould have had nothing, but repentance to feed on, the week following: Even ſo, when thou comeſt into an holy Ordinance, the ſouls Market, where the ſoul hath much buſineſs; here one thought ſtands and beckens, and there lyes another, and at the door of every verſe and ſentence, a ſuggeſtion ſtands; but if thou haſt firmly reſolved at the beginning of the duty, by God's grace, I'le not ſtir from my God, from my work one jot, thou wilt not heed nor exchange a word with theſe vain follies: For alas! if thou ſhould'ſt, the whole gain of thy duty would be eaten up, and the end of thy duty, would be the beginning of thy grief.

8. The more grace, the *more buſineſs ye will find you have to do with God* in his Ordi-

nances; little grace hath little to do, and much grace hath much to do; he hath alwaies buſineſs with God, ſpecial earneſt buſineſs, Pſal. 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord—— that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord——* and why? *to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.* O I have ſomewhat to inquire after, I am to do ſomething by this duty, and therefore cannot trifle. He that comes to viſit his friend in a complement, he talks, he walks, he trifles, and goes home again, but he that comes upon buſineſs, he is full of it: He is like *Abraham's* honeſt and faithful Servant, Gen. 24. 33. *And there was meat ſet before him to eat, but he ſaid, I will not eat, till I have told mine errand.* I have great buſineſs with the Lord, about the Church, and about my ſoul, and I will not eat, nor talk, nor think, nor dally about any thing, till have told mine errand, or heard my Maker's errand unto me: And for this end, it's a rare thing to carry ſomewhat alwaies on the ſpirit to ſpread before God, an heart pregnant with ſome needful requeſt, or matter whereof to treat with God, Pſal. 45. 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter,* and then, *my tongue ſhall be*

like

like the pen of a ready Writer; O then I ſhall go merrily on in his ſervice, when I have matter prepared in my heart. And indeed, as the Mariner ſees further new ſtars, the further he ſails, he loſeth the ſight of the old ones, and diſcovers new; ſo the growing Chriſtian, the further he ſails in Religion, he diſcovers new wants; new Scriptures affect him, new tryals afflict him, new buſineſs he finds with God, and forgetting thoſe things that are behind, he reacheth after thoſe things that are before, and ſo finds every day new buſineſs with the Lord his God: and he that's buſie trifles not; the more buſineſs, the leſs diſtractions. And therefore be adviſed all ye that intend for Heaven, to get more grace. It is as much your duty to get the *ſecond grace*, as it was your duty to get the *firſt grace*; and as the want of this would damn you, ſo a want in that will diſpleaſe God, and that is as bad.

Queſt. But how ſhould a poor weak Chriſtian get ſtrong grace, if I can get any grace, it's well for me, a little grace is much for him, that had none at all.

Anſw. Though thou art a poor weak Chriſtian, yet that ſtrong and bleſſed God, whoſe thou art, *gives power to the faint*,

faint, and to them that have no might, he increaſeth ſtrength, Iſa. 40. 29. And though it's well for thee to have any grace, yet it's better for thee to have more: few folks are contented with a naked life, but they would live well and comfortably, they would be healthful and plentiful, and will a little only of grace ſerve thy turn? And though a little grace be well for him that had none, yet it is not well for him that hath ſuch means and motives for much grace, as thou haſt had. And therefore I renew my counſel, if ever you would attend upon God, or injoy him hereafter without diſtraction, ſtrive for ſtronger grace. And to obtain it,

1. You muſt *be upright and humble:* Upright, for Job 17. 9. *He that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger.* The ſound child grows, the child painted on the wall thrives not: ſo the ſincere Chriſtian, he though he feel it not, comes on, and goes from ſtrength to ſtrength, but the hypocrite, he never grew, for he never had a root. And humble yon muſt be. The humble vallies grow: God can never (he thinks) lay out too much upon an humble heart.

2. You muſt *manage the means of growth with*

with your whole ſtrength. Attend upon the moſt edifying Miniſtry, read the moſt profitable Books, conſort with the moſt lively growing Chriſtians, and particularly be frequent in the tryal of the ſtate of your ſoul. Each week, if poſſible, call your ſelves to ſome account, and ſtrive to diſcern a weekly growth; but if you cannot, deſiſt not from that work, but try again: Single out ſome ſpecial grace, or duty to thrive in next week; as for example, the grace of Patience, ſaving Knowledge, the duty of an Huſband, Parent, or Child. And ſtill be trying, you will find one time or other, what will fully pay you for your labour: only obſerve, he that thrives in the world takes pains and care; and ſo in grace, he that will grow, muſt ſtrive and ſweat for it. A little grace is worth a great deal of pains.

And thus you have the *eighth Point*, to wit, the *Cure of Diſtractions*, if you will apply it; but to what end are Rules, unleſs ye will be ruled by them? Theſe helps cannot help you, except you now faithfully put them in practice. The plaiſter cures not in the box, but laid on the ſore. And your charge be it,

if

if these do you no good. Review them then, and resolve by divine grace to practise them every one, and *the Lord of Heaven give his blessing.*

CHAP. IX.

Encouragements under the burden of Distractions.

Cap. 9. Incouragements under the burden of Distractions.

SECT. I.

§. 1. BUT, lest any honest Christian should by his frequent distractions, be discouraged from his duties, or in his holy duties, I shall in the *ninth place*, prevent such a temptation, by laying down some Encouragements for those that groan under the burden of distractions. And here I assert two things:

1. That these distractions should not *drive you from your duties:* You have been thinking, perhaps, it were better my service were undone, than done so confusedly; and our false hearts are secretly prone to accept any occasion to lay down our work,

work, but believe not the Devils rotten Divinity: he takes on him to be tender, leſt God's name be taken in vain, but this is to inſnare you the more; but in this ſenſe, *obedience is better than ſacrifice*; thy obedience to his command, is more pleaſing to him, than thy torn ſacrifice. And then it is a known caſe, that the omiſſion of a duty will never fit one for a duty better. *Luther's* ſaying herein, was, the more I neglect, the more unfit I am. Indeed, ſome ground will mend by lying ſtill, but that's better ground, than is in faln man's heart. Ours is the ground that muſt be ſtirr'd, and manured, and quickned, and then ſome fruit will come. As one ſin fits the heart for another, ſo one duty fits the ſoul for another. However, it's better to ſerve thy Maſter with a trembling hand, than not at all, and the Father takes well a well-intended work, though it be unwillingly marred in the making.

2. Theſe diſtractions ſhould not wholly *diſcourage you in the performance of your duties.* Diſpleaſe you they muſt, diſcourage you they muſt not. Our good Maſter would not have us draw heavily in his ſervice. It's propheſied, Pſal. 138. 5. *They ſhall*

shall sing in the waies of the Lord. This is a sweet hearing. God's work goes best on, when we sing at it. All the infirmities of a Christian laid together, yet should not discourage him in his duty. *Si dixeris, doleo, sufficit.* And for your support, I lay down these incouragements.

I. Incouragement. Distractions are consistent with grace.

I. *Distractions are consistent with grace**. Grace may live with them, but not be lively long with them: They are like the blew and yellow weeds, that grow with the best corn that is. Grace may live with them, though it can never agree with them: and therefore conclude not against thy self, O I have no grace, I am so pestred with these things: surely no child of God hath such an heart. For this is an epidemick distemper; where-ever the hand of God hath sown good seed, the enemy hath scattered these his tares amongst it. Indeed there is no sin so crimson, that is absolutely inconsistent with grace, abate but that transcendent one, *the sin against the Holy Ghost:* Let no prophane heart make use hereof to hearten them in their sins: a prophane heart, I say, for a gracious heart is of another temper. Alas! the worst of sins do sometimes peep into the best mens hearts, yea may creep into them, and lodge in them for a season.

* *Et si latratum canis sustinet, morsum non timet, latrat enim cum fugere't, tunc verò mordet cum ad consensum pertrahit.* Bern. l.b. de conse.

How

How much more may a sudden thought break in, which, like lightning, springs into the heart without any warning? Do not therefore cry out, when this or any other corruption steals into your hearts, I am a lost man, this *cannot consist* with grace, but this *should not consist* with grace. The former conclusion being made, dejects the spirits; but the latter whets the spirit to amendment. It was foolishly done of *Dinah*, *Gen.* 34. 1. To rove about to see the Daughters of the Land; it was not done like *Jacob's* Daughter, but this was no argument for her to conclude, O I am not *Jacob's* Daughter. So thou hast an heart like *Dinah*, of a gadding temper, that runs abroad, and comes defiled home; this is not done like a sanctified heart, but it were a simple conclusion to draw hence, certainly I am no child of God, I have no true grace at all. For alas, the sweetest Rose hath its prickles, the greatest wits have a spice of madness, and the sincerest heart hath some vanity in it*.

* *Si vel hoc dolemus, quod non possumus orare, jam oramus.*

SECT.

SECT. II.

§. 2. II. Incouragement. Your case is not singular.

II. THE *second* Incouragement is, *That your case is not singular.* Though the commonness of a Plague make it not the better, or less mortal, yet it shews that I am not alone miserable: So, although this consideration make not the sin less heinous, yet it makes the affliction more tolerable. Poor soul! thou are not alone in thy complaints. Go to all the Saints in an Assembly, and they will all conclude, there is none hath a more giddy heart than they, and there's few at the end of an Ordinance would be pleased, that the rest should know the particulars of their stragling. Though charity binds us in particular to hope better of every one than of our selves, yet both God's Word, and * common experience tell us in general, that the imaginations of the thoughts of men are evil continually. And there is none thinks themselves so bad, but there are found others, that would

* *Interdum orantem, lupus ululans & vulpecula ganniens transilivit, psallentiq; gladiatorum pugna spectaculum præbuit & unus quasi interfectus & ante pedes ejus corruens, sepulturam rogavit.* Hieron. in vit. Hilarion. p. 242.

be

be glad to change hearts with them: some indeed are nearer the cure of this disease, and do watch more narrowly, and so have obtained more freedom than others, but yet all are tainted with this infirmity; and every man being convicted by his own conscience, will go out of the Congregation one by one, and there will not be a sinless man to cast a stone at thee *.

* *Non ille qui cœlum clausit ora-tione, animam clausit cogitatione.*

SECT. III.

§. 3. III. Incouragement from the uninterrupted Intercession of Christ.

THE *third* Incouragement is, *That Christ's Intercession for thee is without distraction.* There was fire alwaies on the *Altar*, though the sacrifices were intermitted. His intercession is continual, ours is interrupted. What unspeakable comfort may a poor weak Christian take in this? that *Christ Jesus* is every moment, I say, *every moment* presenting to the Father, the unanswerable argument of his passion, for the impetrating and obtaining pardon, and grace, to help him in time of need. See *Heb.* 6. 20. *Heb.* 3. 25. Poor sinner! thou art sometimes so dead, that thou canst not pray

to purpoſe, ſo guilty thou dareſt hardly pray, and ſo diſtracted, thou thinkeſt thy prayers ſtand for nothing, yet be not diſcouraged, thy Mediator is ſick of none of theſe diſeaſes. The holy *Pſalmiſt* was ſometimes, as Pſal. 77. 4. *ſo troubled, that he could not ſpeak*; yet then had he one to ſpeak for him. The ſight of that precious glorified Son of God, doth infinitely pleaſe and prevail with his Father for us, when we can hardly ſpeak good ſenſe for our ſelves.

I, but how can I tell that he intercedes for me?

Anſw. 1. Haſt thou a good word to ſpeak for him to men? then hath he a good word to ſpeak for thee to God.

And 2. Doſt thou ſigh, and groan, and ſpeak for thy ſelf as well as thou canſt, his interceſſion is to help our weakneſs, not to excuſe our lazineſs. If ſome ignorant poor man, that cannot ſay his errand, but is often out in his buſineſs, have a cordial friend (that hath the grace of ſpeaking, and the favour to be heard) undertake his buſineſs, he needs not be diſcouraged: ſo, though you have much ado, and be often *out* in your beſt reſolved duties, yet you have a friend in Court, that hath the Art of

of it, and the King's ear beside, who ever liveth to make intercession for you, and therefore do your best, and never be discouraged.

SECT. IV.

THE *fourth* Incouragement is, *That distracted duties may keep you humble, when as your perfect performances might make you proud.* It is written of *Master Knox*, that on his death-bed, after he had received many blows from Satan about his sins, he was at last assaulted by him with this temptation, *viz.* That sure God owed him a kindness for his upright and industrious labours, untill that 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. was strongly imprinted on him, *What hast thou which thou hast not received?* Perhaps the Lord fore-saw, that thy heart was ready to be fly-blown with pride, when thou dost well, and therefore he suffers these distractions, like *Vultures* to gnaw upon thy heart, to keep thee humble *. Far be it from you to

§. 4. IV. Incouragement from the consequent.

* *Si vero debilitatus à peccato fixe nequis orare, quantumcunque potes teipsum cohibeas; & Deus ignoscit, eo quod non ex negligentia, sed ex fragilitate non potes ut oportet assistere coram eo.* Basil. in Serm. de Orando Deum.

draw from hence an occaſion to reſt more ſecurely in theſe ſins. That *Knight* was ſirnamed *Fortunate*, becauſe, being on a time in the deck of a ſhip, a great wave came and took him off into the Sea, and another wave took him and ſet him on the deck of another ſhip; yet no man (I trow) would to obtain ſuch a name, be content that a wave ſhould ſo hazard him: Even ſo, though God do ſometimes make uſe of our infirmities to do us good, yet let no man venture therefore to ſin, that grace may abound. Becauſe the *Phyſician* can ſo temper poiſon, that it may do thee good, wilt thou therefore venture to drink poiſon? It is miraculous wiſdom in God to do thee good hereby, and it were miraculous folly in thee *therefore* to venture upon evil. And with this caution, I proceed and obſerve, that it is a very hard thing to hear, or pray exactly without ſome tang of ſpiritual pride after it: And to prevent this, God permits us to wander, and loſe our ſelves, leſt we ſhould be loſt; he ſees that it is ſafer for a man to fall into a leſſer evil, when he can turn it to a greater good, than to attain a leſſer good, and hazard to fall into a greater evil. O when a man ſee

so much dreggs in his very best duties, such constant disappointments, such foolish impertinences in his heart, yea such wicked contrivances in the very presence of God, O then what a wretched man am I! surely I am more bruitish than any man, I am not worthy to come to thee, nor think I my self worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, no such sinner on earth as I; my best is very bad, &c *. Thus the soul is throughly humbled, and brought to sit among the chief of sinners, and spiritual pride rebuked.

* The worst prayers we make (to our sense) speed ever best, and then we pray most happily, when we arise most humbled Dr. *Harris.*

SECT. V.

§. 5. V. Incouragement from Gods gracious acceptation.

THE *fifth* Incouragement is, *That our God can gather some sense out of a distracted duty*, and do us some good by it *, Rom. 8. 27. *He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit*, 'tis true of our spirit as well as of God's. The great searcher of hearts knows what you came pregnant with, what you meant, though you mist it in the delivery. He can tell what was written in the Letter,

* *Evagatio verò mentis quæ fit præter propositum orationis fructum non tollit.* Aquin. 2 2 æ. q. 83. a. 13.

though it did miſcarry, and will anſwer your godly meaning, and over-look your unwilling failing, Pſal. 103. 13. *As a Father pittieth his Children, ſo the Lord*—— Why, the child comes ſometimes full of a ſuit to the Father, and he is quite out in his tale, has forgotten what he would have; but the Father knoweth what he wants, and what he would have ſaid, and grants the whole. And ſo, provided thou be a child, and art heartily ſenſible of thy wants, and comeſt panting to the Throne of Grace; thy heavenly Father will accept thy meaning, and grant thy petition, though thy heart did unwillingly give thee the ſlip, while thou mourneſt for it, and reſolveſt to mend it the next time *. The induſtrious *Scholar* comes ſometimes full and clear in his leſſon, but when he is delivering it, he is out: puts him in his way; he is out again: Now if his *Maſter* know, he had it perfect ere he came, he pities and helps him, and concludes, that fear or care made him miſs it, and that his want is only in utterance ſtrokes him on the head, and bids him labour to do better next time. So the ſe-

* A man that hath the Palſie, his hand ſhakes, but we cannot ſay, he ſhakes his hand: ſo we may ſay, it is not they, but ſin in them, as it is not he, but the Palſie diſtemper in him that ſhakes his hand. Mr. *White of the Thoughts*, p. 68.

rious

rious Chriſtian, he is deeply ſenſible of his ſpiritual wants, and knows and feels well what he muſt aſk, and down he kneels; but yet when he comes to open his caſe, alas! he's drawn away utterly againſt his mind, and his heart runs at random *. Why now your heavenly Maſter knows your preparation, your intention, your indeavour, your grief, your reſolution, he will not turn off ſuch a Scholar. He is a Father, and will make the beſt of his child's faults, eſpecially ſeeing him fallen out with himſelf for them.

* *Non imputatur cum violenter importatur.* Gilb. in ſappl. Bern. in Cant. Serm. 1.

SECT. VI.

§. 6. VI. Incouragement, from the ſufficiency of grace in Chriſt to help againſt them.

THE *ſixth* Incouragement under the burden of diſtractions, is, *That there is grace and ſtrength in Jeſus Chriſt to help you againſt theſe your diſtractions.* Without him we can do nothing to purpoſe; but that's a ſweet word, and a true, I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me, *Phil.* 4. 13. There is a ſtock in Chriſt's hand for ſuch needy ſouls as you *. You find your grace inſufficient for you, but then his grace is ſufficient.

* *Poteſtas noſtra ipſe eſt: Itaq; via breviſſimè ac perfectiſſimè quantum potes.* Aug. Solil. loc. 2.

Lay the mouth of faith then to the two breasts of his power and pitty, and suck thence divine power, to help your humane weakness. How can that little Cistern be empty, that lyes with a Conduit to the Ocean? How can that Wife be poor, whose Husband is a Prince? How can that body languish, whose head hath plenty of spirits, and power to convey them? why, he was anointed with the Oyl of Grace *above his fellows*, but it was *for his fellows*. He was rich for the poors sake; he was strong for the weaks sake. *Be thou therefore strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. 2. 1. Your wound is not incurable, at this door others have sped, and so may you. Wrestle not therefore against these temptations, only in your own strength. The Devil is too strong for you alone, and the heart too deceitful. Not I, but the Grace of God with me, said *Paul* himself. If habitual grace be too weak for them, auxiliary grace is too strong. Money in my friends purse, especially in my Fathers is as good, as in my own, especially when it is there *for me*. There never was seen a *Lazarus* lye dying at this Rich mans door for want. If there be

be any thing in Heaven to pleaſure you that fear him, you ſhall not go without it.

SECT. VII.

§. 7. VII. Incouragement; there will be no diſtractions in Heaven.

THE *ſeventh* Incouragement is, *That in Heaven you will be perfectly rid of your diſtractions.* There his ſervants ſerve him without wandrings *. Here you *would* ſerve him, there you *ſhall* ſerve him. Here we have the world to cumber and draw us off, there will be no other world but Heaven. Here the Devils ſtand at our right hand to reſiſt us, there he ſhall never come, nor once peep among the Saints above. Here our fleſh is continually ſuggeſting evil motions, or crying, *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf*, but fleſh and blood ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, nor trouble us there. Here the crowding of *Gallants* diſtracts us in publick, and the crying of children diſtracts us in private, but *ſupreme holineſs* will be all the *Gallantry* in Heaven, and no cryes were ever heard above. Here one untuneable voice diſtracts us in the Pſalm; but there will be a perpetual Uniſon,

* *Vita juſtorum in his terris non tam in juſtitia cernitur quam in juſtificatione, non in ſanctitate, ſed in ſanctificatione, non in puritate, ſed in purificatione, non in perfectione, ſed in profectu.* J. Fox de ver. gr. Juſtif. p. 162.

Uniſon, and the eternal *Hallelujah* ſhall be ſung *nemine contraſonante*. Here this or that buſineſs calls us away, invades us in the middle, and curtails us at the end, but there is no other buſineſs to go to, no company to fetch you out, nothing that can give you ſuch content, no nor any content, out of that bleſſed imployment. All the outward ſenſes, and all the inward faculties will be ſo wholly taken up with the viſion and fruition of the *Ever-bleſſed Trinity*, that there will not be room for one by-thought, or glance from that fair object to all eternity. O run apace, and you will be ſhortly there, diſpatch your work with all the ſpeed you can, fly with an holy haſte through all worldly buſineſs, caſt anchor at no worldly comfort till you diſcover Land, till your work be done, and your place in Heaven ready for you. And in the *Interim*, be not diſcouraged at your rovings, for you are not yet in Heaven *. Perfection is reward as well as duty, and ſo is our aim here, but our attainment there: And let that happy ſtate be a copy, by which you write your preſent duties. Think ſometimes when you are dull and roving, you ſaw a Caſement open into Heaven, and there beheld thoſe cœleſtial ſacrifices, and their divine imploy-

ment;

*In Grammar, the *Preſent* tenſe is accompanied with the *Imperfect*. But the *Future* with the *Pluſquam Perfectum*.

ment; and think withall, shortly shall I be among them, and do I pray here, as I would sing yonder? doth this impertinent frame sort with yonder most blessed frame? why art thou cast down, O my soul! I shall yet praise him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God. And this may be for incouragement to poor souls that are fainting under the burden of their distractions.

And now at last we see the shore, and so shall only lay on some binding sheaves, and drive away; and that will be by noting some Inferences from this Subject, which is the *Tenth*, and last point to be handled.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Cap. 10. Inferences from this Doctrine.

Inferences from this Doctrine.

SECT. I.

§. 1. I. We have cause to mourn over our best duties.

THE *first* Inference from this Doctrine and Subject, is, *That we have cause to mourn over our best duties*, and when we have written fairest, to throw dust thereon *. Alas! what swarms of Flies corrupt our pot of ointment, and what a savour do these leave thereupon, in the nostrils of God? we can hardly ever be busie *within*, but vain thoughts send for us *without*. As our *Lord Jesus* could not be about his great work, but they came with this disturbance, *Yonder stand thy Mother and Brethren without, to speak with thee:* So it is with us; the Devil and our hearts together, give us no quiet, when never so busie, but will molest and cry, yonder is such a business to speak with thee, this

* *Miserere mei Deus, quoniam ibi plus pecco, ubi peccata mea emendare debeo, oro quidem ore, sed mente foris vagante; orationis fructu privor, corpore sum interius, sed corde exterius, & ideo perdo quod dico—parum enim prodest solâ voce cantare siat cordis intentione.* Bern. Med. c. 8.

Iron

Iron burns, and that work muſt be ordered. Alas! what broken and torn ſacrifices do we bring to our God? what a fair eſcape have we with our lives and ſenſes out of the preſence of God? As that *Emperour* killed the *Centinel* on the place, whom he found aſleep; ſaying, *Dead I found thee, and dead I leave thee.* So moſt juſtly might the Lord anſwer our *diſtracted duties*, with *diſtracting terrours*, and leave us under the judgement of diſtraction, for our ſins in diſtractions. And what a piece of ignorance and impudence is it, for any man to be proud of his duties? Alas! the beſt duties are of divers colours, like the Beggar's Coat, and what Beggar will be proud of his patched Coat? If there were any flowers or ſpices in thy duties, they were none of thine, from thee came all the ſtench, from above came all the perfumes; and what poor reaſon then haſt thou to be proud? It is ſad, that when our ſins make us humble, our duties ſhould make us proud, Iſa. 64. 6. *We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteouſneſſes are as filthy raggs, for there is none that —— ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee.* With what ſhame and trouble would we go among folks, if we had no better cloaths

cloaths than filthy raggs? and yet how high we look, that have no better cloaths of our own, upon our souls? if you wear any better, they are borrowed garments, and what silly wretch is proud of borrowed garments?

And this shews likewise, what need we have of the Righteousness of *Jesus Christ*, to make our prayers pass into the holy place. It was the smoak of the Incense which came with the prayers of the Saints, and ascended up before God out of the Angels hand, *Rev.* 8. 4. The prayers of the Saints themselves, are like smoak in God's eyes (to speak with reverence) but the smoak of the Incense is a perfume in God's nostrils. *Jesus Christ* can be heard when we cannot. Our quaintest *Oratory* is broken and ineffectual. His intercession is constant and *Imperatory*. Go therefore to the Throne of Grace, *leaning on your Beloved*. Keep an actual eye to Christ's mediation in your prayers, and though you bring in his precious Name in the fagg end of your supplication, yet remember you have need of him in every sentence; a broken prayer had need of an intire Mediator.

SECT.

SECT. II.

II. IT follows hence, *That omissions of holy duties are extreamly dangerous.* Into these our *fall is most frequent*, against these our *watch is most careless*, after these our *mourning is most ease*: yet of these the number great, and the nature heinous. If according to that, Jer. 48. 10. *He be cursed that doth the work of the Lord negligently*, what is he that doth not God's work, one way, or other? If a *distraction* in prayer may damn, O what may an *Omission* of prayer do! If the Scholar be whipt that looks off his book, what will become of him that plaid the truant! Do the consciences of God's children smite them for vain thoughts in a duty, how should yours wound you, that you have no thoughts of your duty! O you that omit secret prayer, reading the Scripture, meditation, and such like, will your negligence pass with God? He sees how seldom you sigh in secret; what strangers you are to prayers and tears: should one in some cases, refuse marriage for fear of distractions in God's service? and can you wholly omit his service without danger! Are

§. 2. II. Omission of duty dangerous.

Are watchfulneſs and ſeriouſneſs ſuch diſpenſable things, that they are happy that have them, but one may do well without them? I tell you, he that chaſtens his careleſs children, will puniſh his graceleſs ſervants. He that makes them ſmart for their diſtractions, will make you tremble for your omiſſions. Undone duty will undo your ſouls. It's not enough that you have left off the language of ſwearing, unleſs you have learnt the language of praying. It's not enough that you have burnt your books of curious Arts, unleſs you love to read in the Book of Books, the Scripture. To be mortified to contemplative wickedneſs is well, but till you be vivified to contemplative holineſs, it is not well enough. Do you muſt, or die you ſhall. You may come to Hell as certainly by *not climbing up*, *as by running down*; and loſe Heaven by *Neutrality*, as well as by *Hoſtility*. When you have read the 25th *chap. of Matthew*, you ſhall tell me, whether wanting Oyl may not as truly ruine you, as drinking poiſon; whether an unprofitable ſervant will not come to a ſad reckoning, as well as a prodigal Son. Though you take not anothers, yet you may be conſumed for not giving your own;

own; and in fine, you will find, that ſins of omiſſion do deſerve damnation.

O hearken to this, all ye that live quietly, in the omiſſion of cloſet or family-prayer, of ſolemn faſting, or communion in the bleſſed Supper of the Lord. Hath God abated you of the price that others muſt give? hath he granted a new way to Heaven for you? muſt others make Religion their buſineſs, and you baulk it where you pleaſe? what can your conſciences anſwer to that, Jam. 2. 10. *If a man keep the whole Law* (mark, the whole Law) *and yet offend* [*Gr. ſtumble*, ſtumble and ſtop] *at one point, he is guilty of all:* O beloved! there is a concatenation of Truths and Duties in Religion, you may eaſier go away with all your work than ſome; a negative holineſs will but bring you to a negative Heaven, and you know, behind Heaven-door, is Hell. O awaken therefore your hearts, ye that ſtick at this point, that are far from debauchery, and exceſs any way, but will not be gotten to poſitive duties. Will ye with one daſh expunge the one half of Scripture! Is not Good as amiable, as Evil is hateful? what cauſe is there to fear, that your avoidance of evil is from no good principle, but

either fear, or shame, or interest, or at the best, a better temper? For the love or fear of God would make you cleave to that which is good, as well as abhor that which is evil, and to *do God's will*, as well as *deny your own*.

SECT. III.

§. 3. III. The great need of watchfulness,

III. SEE hence *what grand necessity we have of Watchfulness*; that most continual duty of a Christian; this is the garment we must put on next us every day, especially in every duty. Between duties, that we may not want praying hearts; in duties, that we miss not prayer-blessings. Some duties bind alwayes, but not to be alwayes done, as prayer, hearing, meditation, but you can be safe no where without your watch*, at all times, in all places, with all companies, yea with no company, in all callings; there is a snare for the heart every where. Wherefore saith the Prophet, Hosea 12. 6. *Wait on thy God continually*; and the wise man, Prov. 23. 17. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all*

* *Nusquam securitas neque in cœlo, neque in paradiso, multo minus in mundo. In cœlo cecidit Angelus sub præsentia Divinitatis, Adam in Paradiso de loco voluptatis, Judas in mundo de schola salvatoris.* Bernard.

the

the day long; eſpecially, but not only in your morning and evening ſacrifices. It is a true and a ſad obſervation, that many praying people are moſt devout and ſerious in God's ſervice morning and evening; but trace them all day long, hardly one word of God, or Heaven in their mouths, as if Religion were hem'd up in times of Worſhip; nay, they are often moſt light and vain betwixt times: but be thou *IN* the fear of the Lord, involved, ſurrounded and ſwallowed up in the ſenſe and fear of God's glorious preſence, all the day long *. This will diſpoſe you to duties of Worſhip. A watchful Chriſtian hath his heart ready at a call: it is quickly in tune that was never out. Holy duties are not heterogeneous to an holy heart, the ſame frame will ſerve. He that walks with God, is never out of his way. A ſhort, or rather no preface, will ſerve to uſher in converſing all the day. It is ſometimes the whole work of a prayer to be acquainted with God. Away with this ſtrangeneſs; if you will be upright, walk before God, and watch unto prayer. Methinks, ſincerity and watchfulneſs are

* *Philo* deſcribing the *Therapeutæ* by ſome thought to be Chriſtians, ſayes, They have God perpetually in their mind, inſomuch that in their dreams they ſee nothing but the beauty of the divine powers. Dr. *Lightf.* on Acts. p. 296.

* *Sine hac nec amanda est ipsa charitas, nec ipsi fidei fidendum, nec benè speràndum de ipsa spe.* Dr. *Arrowsmith.*

the Catholick Graces *. Sincerity makes every grace true, watchfulness makes every grace sure. Of all graces, study these Catholick Graces. Here is the essence, here is the quintessence of Religion. O therefore prize this Angelical, this Evangelical Grace, pray for it, Psal. 141. 3. *Set a watch O Lord before my mouth, keep the door of my lips*; for except the Lord do keep the City, the watch-man waketh but in vain. Thou art impotent, God is omnipotent. And then practise it, the use of it will teach the Art of it; as children learn to go step by step, as they learn to swim, by venturing. Adventure on this exercise, try one week, try one day, try one hour, try the next duty. As you renew your falls, still renew your vows; you can do all things through Christ that will strengthen you. I beseech you in Christ's behalf, set on this duty in good earnest. You will pay me for all my pains with one well-grounded resolution, to set up a constant watch. What a sad close will that be unto your life, to say, Cant. 1. 6. *My Mother's children made me a keeper of the Vineyards, but MINE OWN VINEYARD have I not kept?* O therefore watch and pray,

or else temptation will enter into you, and you will fall into temptation.

And most especially in the service of God *. Watch and pray Christ hath joyned together, and what Christ hath joyned together, let no man, especially no good man put asunder. What is the first step in an Ordinance? (as the *Orator* of old in another case) Watchfulness. What is the second step in an Ordinance? Watchfulness. What is the third step in an Ordinance? still Watchfulness. Particularly,

* 1 Pet. 1. 13. *Gird up the loins of your mind.* As loose cloaths hinder a journey, so loose hearts hinder a duty.

First, *In Prayer.* Prayer is a pouring out the heart unto the Lord; by a distraction you pour it by, Psal. 62. 5. *My soul, wait thou ONLY upon God, for my expectation is from him.* A distraction imposes two Masters on the soul to wait on. Rovings in prayer make that which is our most reasonable service, the most irrational thing in the world. No folly like speaking to one person, and thinking of another *.

* *Eternam vitam ore petimus, nec clamea corde desideramus, clamantes tacemus; si vero desideramus ex corde, etiam cum ore conticescimus, tacentes clamamus*, Greg. lib. 22. in Job.

Secondly, *In hearing God's Word.* This is the audible conference of the Almighty with thy soul. A distraction lets him

talk unto the walls. When you come to a Sermon, you *ſtand on your watch, and ſet your ſelf on the Tower, and watch to ſee what God will ſay to you*, Hab. 2. 1. By a diſtraction you do almoſt, as if a ſervant ſtopt his ears at the orders that his Maſter is giving.

* *Oratio tua locutio eſt ad Deum, quando legis, Deus tibi loquitur; quando oras, cum Deo loqueris.* Aug. in Pſal. 85.

Thirdly, *In reading.* Therein you * peruſe God's heart in black and white, where you may believe every letter to be written in blood, not like *Draco*'s Laws, but in bleeding love. A diſtraction neither underſtands, nor applies thoſe ſacred characters. Which of you would ſo read your Father's laſt Will, eſpecially in matters that concern'd your ſelves? One chapter, one leaf, one verſe well read and applyed, will do your heart more good, than an hundred read with half an heart.

Fourthly, *In ſinging Pſalms*, you had need to watch. Thereby you pay unto God the Rent of his mercies. A diſtraction clips the coin, and turns the heart to do homage to the Devil. Well reſolved therefore of *David*, Pſal. 103. 1. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and ALL THAT IS WITHIN ME praiſe his holy Name.* Thy melody is *baſe*, if the *main* ſtrength of the ſoul be not in it. I am perſwaded that God hath ſuffer'd this

Ordinance

Ordinance in particular to be slurr'd once and again, to be left off by some and cast off by others, out of his just Judgement, there being so general a neglect of the inward and feeling management thereof. For where sits the man*, that lets each word and line in the Psalms, run through his heart as he sings them? Nay, if the truth were known, there is hardly one passage, that's felt from the beginning to the end: for if it were, O the heavenly affections it would raise, and the sweet frame it would leave on the soul! you would not part with that Ordinance out of your Families, nor Congregations, for all the world.

* *Cautus ut placeant populo magis quam Deo. Habes in potestate vocem tuam, habeto & meatem; frangis vocem, frange & voluntatem.* Bernde inter. Do. c. 51.

Fifthly, *In Meditation*, great need of watchfulness, else when the soul is soaring aloft, like the Eagle, these darts will, or ever you are aware, strike down the heart again. O how hard is it to spend a quarter of a hour in meditation without a distraction! If there be any thing in the fancy, if there be any thing in the room, if there be any thing in the world, thou wilt have it, to withdraw thy heart from God. And generally the more spiritual the duty, the more distractions. And therefore *I say unto you, watch.*

SECT. IV.

§. 4. IV. Reason to bless God for freedom from Distractions.

IV. SEE hence what cause you have to *bless God for freedom from distractions*, and be sure you do it. Those that have an habitual ability against these snares, O bless the Lord for it! it's he that keeps the heart in tune, not you. We like little children, can break the strings, and put our hearts out of tune, but 'tis the Lord that sets and keeps us in order. You little know the anxiety, and fear, and trouble, that these do cost many a poor Christian; they strive, they mourn, they doubt, they are ready to throw up all: These vultures do gnaw upon their very hearts; no comfort, no joy of the Holy Ghost, no peace within, and all through the continual assaults hereof. And by the only mercy of God thou art well and free. Thou canst continue instant in prayer, thou canst come to Heaven gates, and get thy errand heard, thy business dispatcht, and little distraction in it. O give the Lord praise, lest he leave thee to thy self, and then thy case will be more miserable than theirs. Thankfulness keeps the mercy which ingratitude forfeits.

forfeits. And we are *Free-holders* of theſe bleſſings, but 'tis becauſe we *hold of his free grace* and mercy.

Yea, thoſe that are oft peſtered with them, and yet ſometimes freed, bleſs the Lord for that. It is as much your duty to praiſe God when you are freed, as to bewail it when you have failed. It is the compariſon of a good *Divine*; if a man have planted many Trees in his Orchard, and the Caterpillars, or Cankers have conſumed them all, but one or two, how glad will he be of them that are left, and make much of them? the reſt are kill'd, and theſe only remain. Even ſo thy duties of Religion, which thou haſt planted and expectedſt they ſhould bring thee ſome good fruit; but alas! theſe Caterpillars have conſumed them, unleſs it be here and there a prayer, here and there a Sermon, that have ſcap'd; O bleſs the Lord for theſe! you have often prayed for ſuch a mercy, now you have it: Let praiſes wear, what prayers have won. It is ſad to conſider, what a beggarly ſpirit we are of: if we want any thing, Heaven and Earth ſhall ring of us; but we are graves, wherein the gifts of God are buried without any reſurrection. Where is the heart that

that is pregnant with praiſes, that cries out to his friend, O help me to praiſe the Lord! Divide our lives, and the one half of them is mercies, and the other half is ſins: and yet divide our prayers, and hardly the tenth part is ſpent in praiſes. Alas! thanks is a tacite begging. Let God gain the glory, and thou ſhalt not loſe the advantage. *The God of* Iſrael *is he that giveth ſtrength to his people, bleſſed be God*, Pſal. 68. 35. Conclude with the *Pſalmiſt*, Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy Name give glory. Think not, when thou haſt attended on the Lord without diſtractions, I have quit my ſelf well, but mercy hath quit its ſelf well. He that juſtly payes his ſcore ſhall be truſted again.

SECT. V.

§. 5. V. Religion is an inward difficult and ſerious buſineſs.

V. YOU ſee here in the laſt place, *That Religion is an inward, a difficult, and a ſerious buſineſs*, Rom. 2. 28, 29. *He is not a Jew, that is one outwardly — But he is a Jew, that is one inwardly, and circumciſion is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not*

not of men, but of God. To be watchful and holy within, that's a Chriſtian; to have the vanities of the heart cut off, that's circumciſion; to carry it ſo in an Ordinance, that you may be praiſed of God, that's Religion: while others are quarrelling about ſhadows in God's Ordinances, beware leſt you loſe the ſubſtance thereof.

* There is in Religion a *Body* and a *Soul.* The Religion of the body, is but the body of Religion, the Religion of the ſoul, is the ſoul of Religion. And as the ſeparation of the body and the ſoul, is the death of a man; ſo the divorcing aſunder the form and power of godlineſs, is the death of godlineſs. As it is injury to macerate and deſtroy the body for to cure and ſave the ſoul; ſo it is a crime to damn and loſe the ſoul, to pleaſe and pamper the body. Even ſo it is injurious to deſtroy the body and outſide of Religion, to preſerve and advance the ſoul and inſide of Religion; but it is heinous to loſe and break the heart of the inſide and vitals of Religion, to pamper and adorn the exteriours thereof. It is well, if while we quarrel about a *bended knee*, we do not loſe a *broken heart.* Is the folly of the

* There are written on the walls of the Jews Synagogues at this day. תפלת בלא כוונה כגוי בלא נשמה. *i. e.* Prayer without the intention of the affection, is like a body without a ſoul.

Quakers

Quakers criminal for killing Religion in her body? how ſinful then is *Formality*, that ſlayes Religion in her ſoul!

And then you ſee here alſo, that * Religion is a difficult and ſerious buſineſs; men cannot ſwim to Heaven in a ſtream of Roſe-water, nor row up this River while they are aſleep: we cannot wreſtle with our God, with our hands in our pockets, nor get the bleſſing without ſweat and tears. To repeat ſo many *Pater-noſters*, or *Ave-maries*, with the heart on other things, and running ſometimes from their knees to other buſineſs, in the midſt of their Devotion, as many do in the Church of *Rome*†; or to ſay our prayers, and be ſlumbring, or dreſſing us the while, as is the guiſe of many outſide Chriſtians, is far from our Religion. The *manner* of duties is *material* to the acceptation of them. Ah ſtupid worldlings! how can ye read thoſe Scriptures, Mat. 7. 14. *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*, Mat. 11. 12. *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*, and ſuch like, and yet hope for ſalvation in that ſecure and formal courſe you hold. Do you imagine, there are two waies to Heaven,

* *Quatuor difficillimi laboris laborantis in partu, docentis in ſchola, imperantis in bello.* Precantis *in Eccleſia.* Drexel.

† Behold the Jeſuits Divinity. It is enough to be bodily preſent at the Maſs, though abſent as to the mind, provided he behave himſelf with a certain external Reverence. *Conick.* q. 83 a. 6. n. 197.

Heaven, one for the diligent mortified and watchful Christian, and another for the idle sluggard, or carnal worldling! Have the holiest Saints much ado to walk with God, and get to him, that make it their business? they are saved, and that's all; and can you live and die well enough, that are neither mortified, nor watchful, nor diligent, that have no delight, but in your vanities? no skill, but in the world? no diligence, but for your base ends? what back-way have you found to Heaven? what blind way have you descried to happiness? Awake, awake! look at the Scripture, and then look at your selves, and be convinced, that the only way to eternal happiness, is to make Christ your choice, Religion your business, the Scriptures your Rule, Heaven your design, the Saints your company, and the Ordinances your delight; and in them, remember that you go to *attend upon the Lord*, and this must be done *without Distractions*.

And now you know your duty and your danger. The end of speculation is practice, and the end of our Preaching is not your approbation, but your submission. The Christian Religion is not so much

much the form of ſpiritual Notions, as the power of ſpiritual Motions. He that complements in God's ſervice, will complement his ſoul into Hell. The outſide of Religion may bring you to the outſide of Heaven, but inſide-holineſs will conduct you into the inſide of happineſs. If theſe Directions I have given be but ſtudied and applyed, as you would ſtudy and apply a medicine for the Gout, or Stone, or but the Tooth-ach, I verily truſt they will prove the deſtruction of your diſtractions: But if they be neglected, your *diſtractions* will prove your *deſtruction*.

FINIS.